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H THE  
HISTORY  
OF  
MISS MEREDITH.

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THE

HISTORY



MISS DITH.

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THE  
HISTORY  
OF  
MISS MEREDITH;  
A NOVEL.

H

DEDICATED BY PERMISSION,  
TO THE MOST NOBLE  
THE MARCHIONESS OF SALISBURY.

BY MRS. PARSONS. (S.)

IN TWO VOLUMES. K

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VOL. I.

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BRUTUS said, "Virtue was but a name"—'tis more; 'tis an innate principle of the soul, and the only means of happiness.

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LONDON:

PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR;  
AND SOLD BY T. HOOKHAM, NEW BOND-STREET.  
MDCCXC.

HISTORY

MISS MEREDITH

A NOVEL

DEDICATED BY PERMISSION

TO THE MOST NOBLE

THE MARQUESS OF SALISBURY

BY



IN THREE VOLUMES

VOL. I.

There is still a "Principle" in a man's mind; the mind is the  
source of all the good and the only means of happiness.

LONDON:

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# DEDICATION.

TO THE MOST NOBLE THE

MARCHIONESS OF SALISBURY:

MADAM,

**I**F my being under innumerable obligations to your Ladyship, could alone have authorized an Address of this kind, I might, without permission, have inscribed the following sheets to THE MARCHIONESS OF SALISBURY; but your Ladyship has condescendingly added to those obligations, by permitting me to shelter the first feeble efforts of my pen under your patronage;—an honour which demands my warmest gratitude.

a

UNUSED



UNUSED to the language of Dedication, and accustomed to speak only the genuine feelings of my heart, how fortunate is it for me that, in expressing those feelings, I cannot be suspected of flattery!

WHEN to high birth, every personal advantage, and every elegant accomplishment, we find the soft virtues of humanity united, what respect, what admiration, does the noble possessor inspire! I am proud of avowing that, to your Ladyship's benevolence and generosity, I am indebted for more than life,—for the preservation of eight dear fatherless children!

FORGIVE me, Madam, if the effusions of my heart have offended that delicacy which shrinks from public praise, and experiences, in the self-approving mind, a satisfaction more gratifying than the highest panegyric.



I must, now, presume to solicit your Ladyship's accustomed goodness in behalf of the following sheets; the very disadvantageous circumstances under which they were written, will, I trust, be admitted as an excuse for their deficiency in point of wit and humour: I am conscious of their defects, and tremble for their fate.— However, those motives which induced me to publish, namely, the hope of providing for my family, will, I am confident, in the eyes of my friends, atone for all the errors of my pen; and the being permitted to inscribe my work to your Ladyship, must stamp a value on it, which otherwise it never could have gained.

DEIGN then, Madam, to accept MISS MEREDITH; unworthy as I fear she is of your patronage: and allow me to embrace this opportunity of  
a 2  
testifying

iii  
**DEDICATION.**

testifying the respect, gratitude, and  
admiration, with which I have honour  
to be,

**MADAM,**

**Your Ladyship's most obliged,**

**most devoted, and**

**most humble Servant,**

**MARCH 31, 1790.**

**ELIZA PARSONS.**

**No. 15, East-place**

**LAMBETH.**

**PREFACE.**

---

## P R E F A C E.

**T**HE Author of the following Memoirs submits them to the public eye with trembling anxiety.

A first effort might, perhaps, be entitled to some indulgence, did not the presumption of writing after a BURNEY, a SMITH, a REEVE, a BENNET, and many other excellent female novelists, subject the Author of MISS MEREDITH to the imputation of Vanity: Yet all motives of this kind she utterly disclaims—far different were her incitements! accustomed to affluence, and for many years blest with prosperity, a combination of unfortunate events and disappointments, occasioned a cruel reverse of fortune. Her husband, unable to sustain the severity of his fate, sunk under his misfortunes, and left her with a numerous family unprovided for. To assist in supporting these children, are the following Memoirs published:



and such is the Author's reliance on the benevolence of the public, that she presents her Novel at the tribunal from whence there is no appeal, trusting, that her inducements for presuming to publish, will shield MISS MEREDITH from every shaft of criticism.

The Author seizes with delight and avidity this opportunity of acknowledging her heart-felt gratitude to her numerous and liberal Subscribers; and particularly to those Ladies and Gentlemen who have warmly interested themselves in her behalf, and encouraged her to print the following sheets. Should this work be favourably received, the same motives which actuate the Author *now*, may induce her at some future period to resume the pen; but should it fail of success, and appear deserving condemnation, she can only say, that she will never again presume to obtrude any other productions on the discerning Public.

MARCH 31, 1790.

No. 15, *East-place*,

LAMBETH.



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# HISTORY

OF

## MISS MEREDITH.

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MISS MEREDITH TO MISS MONTAGUE.

*Meredith-hall, Caermarthenshire,*

MY DEAREST FRIEND,

I ARRIVED at home perfectly safe, and was received by my father with transport: I took my wayward heart to task, and chid it severely, for being so loth to obey his summons; for sure he is the best, the tenderest of parents.

The cause of my being recalled was, as you suspected, the arrival of young Williams from abroad. My dear father's anxiety to see me married in his life-time, joined to his long friendship for Sir Rowland Williams, made him very readily concur in that gentleman's proposal of uniting our families. The young man bears a most unexception-

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B

able



able character, and my father seems intently fixed on the match: Heaven grant, therefore, that my heart may follow his wishes! for you, my dear friend, (who know the only foible my father has, is an obstinate adherence to a resolution once formed,) you will easily believe that any opposition, on my part, to his designs, would entirely destroy that happiness which it has ever been my chief study to promote. Perhaps, however, the young gentleman may not be so easily led; there is a possibility that his affections may be already engaged; or, if that be not the case, there is no certainty of my meeting with his approbation: and, as he is an only son, I suppose no constraint will be put on his inclinations. It is rather mortifying for your friend to undergo a scrutiny from a man who, probably, may be taught to believe her fate dependant upon him. But I will not be treated with indignity by any person breathing: to obey my father, is the first wish of my heart; still, I would sooner die, than suffer insult, or unite myself with one who appeared indifferent to me, or assumed any self-importance from my father's intentions in his favour.

In short, I am in a very uneasy, fretful state of mind; they (that is Sir Rowland and his son) dine here to-morrow; and I will write to you  
when

when the interview is over: at present, I can only assure you of the sincere love of your

HARRIET MEREDITH.

I enclose a few lines of grateful acknowledgement to Mrs. Montague, for her goodness to me while under her hospitable roof.

## MISS MEREDITH, IN CONTINUATION.

*Meredith-ball.*

I KNOW my beloved friend is very anxious to hear my opinion of Mr. Williams, whom my father has so repeatedly told me, he wished to call his son. He came with Sir Rowland, this day to dinner. An awkward meeting for us both! as, I doubt not, but his father had previously informed him of my worthy parent's wishes, and his own.

I did not make my appearance till the dinner-bell rung, and then entered the dining-parlour confused and embarrassed. My father took Mr. Williams by the hand, and introduced him to me as his very particular friend: Mr. Williams bowed, and expressed his gratitude for the distinction, which he flattered himself (he said) might recommend him to my favour. I curtsied, but could not speak: my spirits were not high; and the introduction fluttered me a good deal: indeed, his embarrassment seemed equally great; for he spoke with hesitation, and in a very low voice: during dinner, however, he recovered his spirits; my father led him to speak of observations he had made in his travels: he conversed pleasantly; and I, now and then, ventured to steal a look at him.

I think

I think his person agreeable, and his manners genteel, without the least dash of the travelled coxcomb; a character which, of all others, I most despise: in short, though I do not say he is the man whom my heart might have singled out, if left to its own choice, yet I can see nothing to dislike in his appearance; and knowing my father's determination never to give up a favourite point, I ought to return thanks to Heaven that there is not, apparently, any reasonable objection to my union with Mr. Williams.

As to those violent emotions and agitations dignified by the name of love, I believe they exist only in the brain of the poet and the novelist; or, perhaps, in the heated fancy of some young uneducated female, who knows not how to regulate her passions. I confess to you, Emma, my own choice would be the single life; but as my father has no child except myself, and is extremely anxious that I should marry, I submit to his will; for, to promote his happiness, I would, on all occasions, readily sacrifice my own. But what sentiments Mr. Williams may entertain towards me, I know not; he paid me great attention; and once, when my father happened to mention how highly he had heard the Italian ladies celebrated for their charms, he replied, "I have seen very beautiful women abroad, but they are all too con-



scious of their beauty, and want that amiable delicacy, that lovely sensibility, so conspicuous in the English ladies. You must indeed admire them, as you would a fine picture; but your admiration stops at the face: their conversation is trifling; their manners coquetish; and their virtues generally assumed, or over-balanced by their levities." "So then, young gentleman, (answered my father) you have retained your heart and defy the power of Cupid." "I certainly returned from the Continent with a heart unwounded; but, possibly, to experience the power you mention with greater force in my own country." A glance, I could not help observing, produced a blush on my cheek, and a mutual smile on the countenances of the two old gentlemen. On the whole, our evening passed off very tolerably, and I feel sincerely glad that the first interview is over.

Let me now enquire, my dearest Emma, how your heart determines with respect to Sir George Oldham? You are well convinced, you say, that your mother never will approve the match; and, I am sure, you never can act in direct opposition to her wishes; why then allow him to dangle after you? Why incur the imputation of carrying on a clandestine correspondence? A proceeding disrespectful to your mother, and highly gratifying

gratifying to his self-love, which (if I am rightly informed) is infinitely superior to his esteem for any body else. Pardon me, but you know the basis of friendship is mutual confidence; and its surest test, an alacrity to point out and correct the little faults we may perceive in each other.

I am persuaded you cannot really intend to encourage Sir George; the libertinism of his character ought never to be overlooked, much less rewarded with the hand of my dear Miss Montague. Your lively spirits tempt you to laugh and flirt with this Narcissus; but O, beware, lest, like the fly that buzzes round the candle, you should be burnt at last. Heaven forbid that the virtues and excellencies of my Emma, should fall to the lot of a conceited, abandoned libertine! Discard him, my dear girl; trifle not with your mother's peace of mind, nor give room for the envious of your own sex to censure your conduct, or for the ignorant to plead your example as an excuse for their imprudencies.

I enclose a few lines to your sister, with the poem she requested. Adieu, my beloved friend! let me hear from you speedily, and tell me you forgive the freedom of your truly affectionate

HARRIET MEREDITH.

## MISS MONTAGUE TO MISS MEREDITH.

*Glenmore-hall, Caermarthenshire.*

AND so you were really and truly sent for home to undergo an examination from the young traveller?—Charming indeed!—I don't know how you might *feel* on the occasion, but I know how I should have *acted*. With my head a mile high, and assuming the stateliness of a sultana, I would presently have taught the young man to know my self-importance.

Positively your father's proceedings drive me wild. What, shall my beloved Harriet, with beauty, sense, and ten thousand other excellencies superior to her sex, shall she be offered to a man, perhaps unconscious of her worth, when she need only be seen, and known, to have the first titles in the kingdom at her feet?—My heart revolts against young Williams—he cannot be worthy of you:—Do not, then, suffer filial duty so entirely to govern your inclinations, as to submit to marry a person whom you cannot love. Shall virtues, like your's, which might improve and reform mankind, shall they be sacrificed to one who is, perhaps, insensible of their value?—Shall you be condemned

“To waste your sweetness in the desert air,”

and



and live buried in the country all the days of your existence?—Seriously, I am out of patience at your (I had almost said stupid) submission to the bargain and sale contrived by a couple of old musty avaricious fellows, who, being past the pleasures of life themselves, are determined to prevent their children from enjoying them.

As to young Williams, unless he is an idiot, he must admire you; but, if not greatly altered indeed by his travels, I am sure he never can deserve you. I knew him when a boy, before you came to live in our neighbourhood, and a poor humdrum spiritless being I always thought him. You have but one failing, Harriet; and that is, a too great readiness to submit your judgment to the opinion of others, who have not a thousandth part of your understanding. But let me hear how you proceed; and, as a stander-by sees more of the game, I shall be able to judge what kind of folks you have to deal with.

And now I come to that part of your letter, in which you question me about Sir George Oldham. Shall I confess the truth?—Well, then, I fear the poor fly is already burnt: In short, I don't know how it is, but I never could bear contradiction; and, without intending to be disobedient, or to act contrary to my mother's wishes, I frankly own, the continual lectures I receive



on Sir George's account, and the very little credit my mother seems inclined to give him for the good qualities he possesses, have lessened her candour and judgment in my eyes, and thrown a veil over those vices which, by a different method, might have appeared to me in all their magnitude. But your opinion, my beloved friend, weighs more with me than all my mother's sermons; and never should I forgive myself, were I drawn into any rash action unworthy your friendship. But the case is this: my father's affection for my mother, and his confidence in her principles, induced him to leave my fortune, and my sister's, (£30,000 each) to us, on the day of marriage, upon condition only that we married with her approbation; otherwise we can claim but five thousand pounds a-piece, and she will have the sole disposal of the remainder. This partial manner (I must call it so) of bequeathing our fortunes, has thrown too much power into my mother's hands, and may, perhaps, be one cause of my differing from her: she thinks she has a right to direct and controul my inclinations, if not agreeable to her own; and I think she assumes too absolute an authority, in consequence of the power she has acquired over my fortune; therefore I find myself less inclined to pay that deference to her opinion which, otherwise, I might do. My Harriet, I  
know

know, will chide me for this; but I cannot help it. I see and acknowledge that Sir George Oldham has a thousand faults; he is gay, volatile, and extravagant; opiated, fond of the sex, and, if report errs not, values himself upon, and boasts of, his successes with them. But, at the same time, he is sensible, generous, and, to me, always condescending and polite; nay, he does not scruple to confess his past errors, and laments that, in consequence of them, he cannot obtain my mother's good opinion: however, he has won Isabella to his party; she constantly speaks of him with delight; and indeed the man is handsome, insinuating, and all that: in a word, I have not resolution to discard him; so matters must rest as they are a little longer; but I will, if possible, endeavour to let your judgment, your admirable good sense, gain the victory over this perverse heart. Do not despise me, dear Harriet, for my blind partiality; and rather laugh me out of it, than join with my wise mamma in long lectures. Adieu! let me hear from you soon, and be not too severe on your affectionate

EMMA MONTAGUE.

ARTHUR WILLIAMS, ESQ. TO SIR EDWARD  
STANLEY.

**B**E not offended, dear Stanley, at my having suffered a whole week to pass without writing. I have been in a state of intoxication ever since I came home—absolutely entranced. Yes, your, till now, insensible friend, is caught, fixed for life; for should the charming Harriet refuse me her hand, I will never marry any other woman. “But who is this charming Harriet?” Why, Ned, the very person whom I so much dreaded, whom I was so strongly prepossessed against—Miss Meredith!

You know how reluctantly I yielded to my father’s wishes, how little I relished returning to England professedly to marry; but the affectionate indulgence I have ever experienced from him, determined me to comply with his desires, and trust to his goodness for not urging a marriage, should the lady in question prove very disagreeable to me.

I was welcomed home by my father with such warmth of affection, as called for every grateful feeling of my heart; and at that moment I would, with transport, have sacrificed my own peace to have ensured his. During the evening, he told  
me



me Miss Meredith was absent on a visit, but expected to return home next day. " My dear son, (said he), I flatter myself you will approve my choice:—my old friend, Meredith, is the worthiest of men; he has a very large estate, and his daughter, since her excellent mother's death, has been most judiciously educated by her aunt, who lived with her till within this year. I shall say nothing of her person—but for her mind, it is beyond all praise, and the abode of every virtue: could I see you united to her, all my wishes in this life would be gratified; for then your happiness could not fail of being permanent. I hope your heart is free, and that you have not been drawn into any unwarrantable connection abroad."

I assured him I was entirely disposed to coincide with his wishes, truly grateful for his attention to my happiness, and perfectly free from all engagements, or even prepossessions. With this assurance he seemed quite contented, and we passed the remainder of the evening with that satisfaction, that heart-felt pleasure, which, as some poet says, almost " o'er pays the grief of absence." But when I retired to rest, I confess I felt a certain uneasy sensation at the idea of Miss Meredith: my father's silence with respect to her person, both now and in all his letters, (no one of which said more of her than that she was  
an



an agreeable young woman, of great merit and accomplishments), led me to suppose she could boast few personal charms; and, consequently, I had not formed the most pleasing idea of her in "my mind's eye;" therefore, I confess, I rejoiced to find she was not at home, and that I should have a day's respite.

The next morning Mr. Meredith came to visit me, and I never saw a more respectable looking man; openness and benevolence appeared in his countenance, and seemed to dictate all his conversation: he said he expected his daughter in a few hours, and invited my father and me to dine at the hall on the following day. I was delighted with the old gentleman. "Dear Sir, (said I to my father), as soon as he was gone, if the lady you design for me possesses that goodness of heart so obvious in Mr. Meredith, she must render any man happy, though her personal charms may not be equal to the beauties of her mind. My father (with a smile) replied, that he was glad I had so rational a way of thinking; for though a pretty face was certainly a pleasing sight to a young fellow, yet, as its attractions would cease with its novelty, an amiable disposition was far more conducive to happiness in the married state. This, as you may suppose, confirmed my ideas of Miss Meredith's person.

The

The next day I dressed to attend my father to the hall, not without some qualms respecting the result of our visit.

I am interrupted—what the result was, my next shall inform you.

Yours truly,

ARTHUR WILLIAMS.

Mr.

## MR. WILLIAMS, IN CONTINUATION.

DEAR STANLEY,

IN my last I told you I was ready to attend my father :—as the hall is only two miles from us, we were soon there. Mr. Meredith received us with great cordiality. My eyes sought his daughter, but in vain ; we saw nothing of her till the dinner-bell rung—then she entered—and, to my astonished sight, displayed such a blaze of charms as I never beheld in any other woman. I stood transfixed with amazement ; and had not Mr. Meredith taken my hand and introduced me to the angelic girl, I might have become, in reality, a statue. What I said, Heaven knows ; I stammered out some incoherent nonsense, and, moving mechanically to the dinner-table, seated myself opposite to her. Never, Stanley, did I behold beauty till now ! I may, indeed, have seen faces as regular, but, in her, beauty, modesty, delicacy, sensibility, and all the winning graces are personified. Such intelligence ! such expression of countenance !—O, Stanley, during one half hour I was gone an age in love !

She was led, in the course of the evening, to converse on several subjects, and delivered her opinions with so much good sense, accompanied by



by that amiable diffidence so captivating in the female character, that I was quite lost in admiration, and forgot, for a time, that there existed in the world any other being but Miss Meredith.

On our return home, my father told me he enjoyed the surprize visible in my countenance when my charmer entered. " I would not raise your expectations, (said he), I rather wished her beauty to burst suddenly upon you ; besides, description could not have done it justice. You will feel no reluctance, I presume, to a further intimacy with this amiable girl?"

" Reluctance ! my dear Sir ; I adore her ; and feel ten thousand terrors lest she should not approve your son ; for all my happiness depends upon her."

" Well, well, (cried my father), you need not despair ; you will have opportunities enough to conciliate her affections, and merit her esteem ; her heart, I believe, is wholly disengaged ; be it your study to make yourself an interest there."

Yes, Stanley, every faculty of my soul shall be exercised in gaining the charming Harriet's approbation. Delightful employment ! rapturous thought, to be the first to raise a tender idea in that bosom which is the seat of every virtue !

O, my friend, speed with your wishes the success of your devoted

ARTHUR WILLIAMS.

Miss



## MISS MEREDITH TO MISS MONTAGUE.

*Meredith-hall.*

MY dearest Emma must pardon my silence for this week past, as my time has been wholly spent in nursing my father through a severe, tho', thank Heaven, not a long fit of the gout. Mr. Williams comes here daily; and, I must say, improves on acquaintance: my father is delighted with him, and enjoys, in anticipation, the happiness which must (he says) be my lot with so worthy a young man. 'Tis yet early days to fix my opinion; but, as far as I have already observed, he seems friendly, benevolent, and sincere; in short, he possesses those qualities I should have wished for in a brother, and, as a brother, I esteem him: I receive his visits with pleasure, but I see him depart without pain; however, I look forward to an union with him, as an event that may be productive of comfort to myself, and from which my father will derive the highest satisfaction. You, I know, will say, that without stronger sentiments of regard towards Mr. Williams, I ought not to become his wife; but, believe me, I prefer him to all the men I have yet seen: and, perhaps, I may not be susceptible of those violent emotions, that tenderness of heart, called love; if this be  
the

the case, I am thankful ; having frequently observed, that great sensibilities, and strong passions, too often make us wretched.

“ For, as distress the soul can wound,

“ ’Tis pain in each degree :

“ Bliss goes but to a certain bound ;

“ Beyond is agony. ”

Without being too vain, I think I may reckon on Mr. Williams’s approbation ; since every word, every look, tells me he loves, and endeavours to merit a return. I have not an ungrateful heart ; and, as he certainly possesses a considerable portion of my esteem, he may at length, perhaps, inspire me with a more tender sentiment.

I had yesterday the pleasure of receiving a packet from my dear aunt Melcombe ; she is on her way to England, and returns much better for her tour. She has lost Miss Salmon, who (as you may recollect) kindly accompanied her on my father’s refusing to part with me ; the young woman is advantageously married to a merchant at Marseilles. My aunt says, her present travelling companions are the Countess Dowager of Bleville and her son, one of the most accomplished young noblemen in the kingdom ; from both of whom she has received a thousand civilities, and expects to derive much future satisfaction : as my Lord’s steward has purchased for him, during his absence  
from

from England, that fine old seat Cranbrook-castle, which, as the house is so near Meredith-hall, will enable my aunt to introduce me to the new owners. She hopes to be here in less than six weeks from the date of her letter ; I may, therefore, very soon expect my dear second mother, whose uncommon tenderness and attention have prevented me from feeling the loss of a parent whom, indeed, I scarcely remember. I suppose my aunt knows nothing of my father's designs with regard to Mr. Williams, as she does not mention the subject.

And now let me entreat your pardon, Emma, for scribbling so much about myself, and neglecting to notice that part of your letter which gives me real concern.

I remember the time, my friend, when you thought Mrs. Montague the best of mothers, and rejoiced in the confidence your father had placed in a woman whose delight was to make her children happy. Why is it, then, that the yoke now sits so heavily on your neck ? Shall I answer ? From an unfortunate attachment to an object disliked by your mother, and whose libertine character your own judgment must condemn. Will you, then, suffer your eye to mislead your reason, and triumph over every tender obligation, every duty you once delighted to fulfil ? What a selfish passion ; what a narrower of the heart is love, if, like Aaron's rod,

it



it swallows up all prior affections ! Your mother will never consent to your becoming the wife of Sir George Oldham, and yet you persist in encouraging his addresses. What must be the consequence ? I shudder when I think of it. But you will not, you cannot have recourse to a clandestine marriage ; it is impossible ; for what young woman of delicacy could bear to have it said, that her inclinations were so ungovernable as to prompt her to leave a tender parent, disobey her commands, and throw herself into the power of a man whom she had known only a few months ? Look into those families where both husband and wife were as ardently in love as you fancy yourself now ; where the lady, forgetful of the regard which ever should be paid to delicacy and decorum, and in defiance of duty and gratitude to the authors of her being, quits her paternal roof, and hurries into a clandestine marriage. Does she find that happiness she so fondly expected ? No ; when the moment of reflection comes, she thinks of the sacrifices she has made, bewails the loss of that support, that affection she once experienced from her own family, dreads the effects of the bad example she has set her children, and laments her having forfeited that conscious dignity which is the sweet reward, and never-failing attendant of those who uniformly act well. She cannot



cannot even look up to her husband with confidence; for, be assured, no man ever yet *esteemed* the woman, who, for his sake violated her first duty, —that due to our parents. The knowledge such a woman must have of the giddy, the disgraceful appearance she makes in the eyes of the world, added to all the foregoing reflections, will embitter her happiest hours; and, what is still worse, the very man she has obliged, will probably think light of the favour, and knowing how easily she was prevailed upon to deceive a parent, may suppose it would not cost her much to deceive a husband, should temptations fall in her way; and, consequently, he will either be suspicious, or entirely indifferent to her.

Such are the almost certain effects of clandestine marriages; but of this you must be so well convinced, that I ought to entreat your excuse for dwelling so long upon the subject.

How greatly would you add to my felicity, by assuring me you had dropped all connexion with Sir George Oldham! What arts must he have used to engage your esteem, for a character you once abhorred! a libertine, a gambler, who considers all mankind as his prey, and, therefore, must be callous to every tender feeling!

Emma, my dear Emma, reflect a moment; think what you owe to yourself, to your friends, and that moment may determine your fate.

But

But can the gentle, amiable Isabella, can she admire a man whose character is so abandoned? impossible! I charge you, read this letter to her, and inform me of her real sentiments.

My dearest friend, adieu! Remember, happiness is within your grasp, and do not throw it from you. The sacrifice required can occasion only temporary pain; but an union with the vicious, must produce lasting sorrow.

Ever yours,

HARRIET MEREDITH.

Miss

## MISS MONTAGUE TO MISS MEREDITH.

*Glenmore-ball.*

**A**LAS, my dearest Harriet, the Emma whom you honour with your friendship, deserves not your smallest regard!

By what fatality am I impelled to act in opposition to my judgment? and why must I love, where I cannot justly esteem? Yet so it is. Sir George Oldham has stolen away my heart; and vain is every effort to recover it. O Harriet, if you heard him plead as I do; if you heard how frankly he confesses his past errors, and declares his detestation of the vices into which he has been drawn, surely you would hope, with me, that his repentance is sincere; and why should I not flatter myself that I may be intended as an humble instrument to confirm his good purposes, and ensure his reformation? He threw himself at my feet last night: "My dearest Miss Montague, (said he), bless me with your favour, for on you depends my happiness both in this world and the next. If you will deign to confide in me, be assured of my everlasting gratitude. I know myself unworthy of you; who, indeed, is worthy? and yet, to deserve you, far as a man can do shall be the study of my life."

"But



“ But suppose, (replied I), that *I* should suffer myself to be influenced in your favour, *my mother* never will ; and could I bear the thought of violating her commands? commands so strictly given?”

“ Pardon me, Madam, for interrupting you, but Mrs. Montague’s commands originate from a mistake ; she has heard of my irregularities, but she knows not how sincerely I detest them ; she is prejudiced against me ; and some people will rather seek occasions to justify their dislike, than consent to alter their opinion, and confess themselves severe and hasty in their judgment.”

He urged much more to the same purpose ; and all his arguments seemed rational and conclusive : indeed, my dear, had you heard our conversation, your opinion of him would have been much altered. That I am deeply entangled, more deeply than I was aware of, is too true ; still there must be some merit in reclaiming a libertine ; and, if my happiness is dear to him, he cannot, from the fear of wounding me, again engage in pursuits detrimental to his fortune, health, and honour. Your advice, my excellent friend, has great and deserved weight with me ; yet surely your good-nature would operate in his behalf, were you convinced of his sincerity. What encouragement would the sinner have to forsake his evil ways, if

virtuous people, although he repented, were to set their faces against him, to shun him, and not allow him the benefit of their bright example? However, I repeat that I will not forfeit your friendship by any rash step. Continue to enlighten me with your advice; for your reproofs are gentle, and may amend a faulty heart; while my mother's violence only serves to render me more obstinate. "Positively, Emma, *you shall not* see Sir George Oldham! If you persist in giving him encouragement, you are no child of mine; not a shilling shall you have in my power to with-hold from you; and never shall *his wife* enter these doors!" Such is the language I am for ever doomed to hear! But enough on this subject.

I rejoice to find you feel no reluctance in obliging your father. That you esteem Mr. Williams, I believe; but it is very evident you do not love him. You think you are not susceptible of the tender passion: ah, my dear, you deceive yourself; my life for it, you possess the most refined sensibilities, only you have not yet met with your kindred mind; and, settled as matters now are, Heaven grant you never may!

Isabella has read your letter. "My dear sister, (said she), throwing her arms round my neck, be guided by Miss Meredith: what a picture has she drawn

drawn of a clandestine marriage! Never will I prove that giddy, that contemptible creature she describes!—Dear Emma, give up Sir George; I would not for the world have my sister's happiness dependent on a man whose reformation is, at best, but doubtful; his handsome person and specious manners are indeed attractive; but will they compensate for the want of probity, honour, and virtue?" The girl actually shed tears; she who, a few hours before, spoke of Sir George Oldham with admiration—such are your persuasive powers, Harriet! Deuce take this subject! I have got into it again.

Let me congratulate you on the near prospect of your aunt's return; and likewise on the acquisition you will have to your neighbourhood. An Earl! You are disposed of, Harriet; and therefore, if you will not let me have Sir George, I shall certainly pay you a visit, and set my cap at Lord Bleville. A coronet is a pretty ornament to one's coach, and fifty times smarter than a furious bloody hand. But adieu! My mother has just sent for me to take an airing with her, and, as I fear, to be worried with a sermon.

Bell joins in love, admiration, and so forth, with

Your truly obliged and affectionate,

EMMA MONTAGUE.



SIR EDWARD STANLEY, TO ARTHUR  
WILLIAMS, ESQ.

*Bath.*

YOUR two friendly letters, my dear Williams, followed me to Bath, where I am at present with my brother, the Colonel, who is, I fear, in very declining health.

I sincerely congratulate you on your happy prospects. Such a woman as you describe Miss Meredith to be, must ensure your permanent felicity, and is the greatest blessing a man can possess. My poor brother is falling a sacrifice to his connection with one of the worst of women, whom he has long kept, and who had art enough to make him think her constant: he doated on her, and frequently had thoughts of marrying her: about three months ago he set off with a party to Windsor, intending to be out all night; but stopping on his way at Richmond, he met with some friends, who came thither to dine, and was persuaded to relinquish his first scheme, and spend the day with them: from Richmond he returned to London in the evening, and arrived at his own house about twelve o'clock: being let in by the porter, he walked directly up stairs, when trying to open his bed-room door, he found it  
locked

locked on the inside ; surpris'd at this, he rapped loud, and immediately heard a bustle and a whispering ; presently the door was opened by his lady, who appeared hurried and terrified, as she said, lest any accident had occasioned his unexpected return. He demanded to know why the door was locked, and what voices he had heard ? She told him, when he was absent, she always fastened the door, and that he had heard no voice but her's : he remained unsatisfied, yet knew not what to say ; when, just as he was stepping into bed, his foot entangled in something, which, on examination, proved a man's cravat. " To whom, Madam, does this belong ?" (cried he.) The woman faltered. He then looked under the bed, and saw a man, whom he dragged out, and found to be his butler. The rage into which my brother was thrown by this discovery, burst a blood-vessel ; and, though the accident did not prove immediately fatal, it has brought on a rapid decline. The wretches who caused this mischief, left the house that night ; and next day came the lady's attorney to claim a settlement my infatuated brother had made upon her, of four hundred pounds a year for life : neither was this all ; for, in less than a week afterwards, he had bills brought in to the amount of near six thousand pounds ; every penny of which he must pay, though he was not con-

scious of owing a shilling. Such are the blessed effects of illicit connections!

Be assured, dear Williams, when I can leave my brother, I shall certainly pay you the promised visit. A friend of mine, Lord Bleville, has just made a purchase in your neighbourhood: he is daily expected from Italy, and should he ever come to reside at Cranbrook-castle, you will, I am sure, derive great pleasure from paying him those attentions to which his uncommon merit, independent of his high rank, entitle him.

Farewell! Let me know when the happy knot is tied, that I may send proper felicitations.

Yours sincerely,

EDWARD STANLEY.

SIR



SIR GEORGE OLDHAM, TO WILLIAM  
HERBERT, ESQ.

*Caermarthenshire.*

AT length, Herbert, I have conquered; this charming Emma will be mine, in spite of her mother and the prudish Miss Meredith, (who is, I find, devilishly averse to me); for when once a girl condescends to admit private meetings with a man, her heart is in his hand, and he may do with it what he pleases. Emma really is beautiful; besides, she will have thirty thousand pounds on the day of marriage—there's the attraction!—Every thing is *en bon train*, and I shall very soon get her to go off with me; but I am cursed low in cash at present, Herbert—and the road to matrimony is an expensive one—do, therefore, send me a supply, if you can. On my return from the land of Hymen, I shall immediately hasten to London, demand my wife's fortune, pay my debts, and break forth from my present obscurity, into all my former splendor. Adieu! Rejoice in the success of

Your

GEORGE OLDHAM.

ARTHUR WILLIAMS, ESQ. TO SIR EDWARD  
STANLEY.

**I** SINCERELY grieve, my friend, for the melancholy cause of your detention at Bath. Poor Colonel Stanley! his situation is deplorable; yet, could his health be re-established, I should think him cheaply off in getting rid of an abandoned woman at the expence of a few thousands.

My prospects are, at present, bright; but there is no happiness without alloy. I have opened my heart to the charming Miss Meredith—I have been heard with complacency and kindness—yet I am not satisfied. I adore the divine girl so ardently, that my very existence depends upon her love; and this I cannot flatter myself with possessing. She listens to my vows, and seems obliged by my assiduities; assures me of her esteem, and declares her readiness to comply with her father's wishes in my favour; but her heart, I am persuaded, feels no interest in my behalf. She, however, laughs at my doubts and tender apprehensions; and frequently, when I venture to mention them, replies, “ I fear, Mr. Williams, you will refine away your happiness by cherishing such absurd ideas: if I know my own heart, it is your's; perhaps, indeed, I have not such lively sensibility

as you describe; but I feel no reluctance in complying with my father's request, and your wishes: what would you have more?"—"More! my dearest Harriet, I would have you delighted at seeing me, miserable when I am absent, and dead to every pleasure in which I have no share; in a word, I would occupy the whole of your attention."

"Upon my honour, (returned she, laughing), you would wish to render me a very amiable creature:—but if love is such a selfish passion, I desire to have nothing to do with it; and, if my union with you does not strengthen, rather than weaken, my duties and attachments to others, I shall find myself extremely disappointed: therefore change the subject, and be contented with knowing, I prefer you to all men." "Contented! my dearest Harriet, I am transported by your goodness, and will trust to my constant endeavours for preserving that enviable preference."

Nevertheless, to you, Stanley, I must confess my uneasiness;—There is so much intelligence, so much sensibility in Miss Meredith's countenance, that I cannot persuade myself but she is capable of feeling a warmer passion than it has been my fate to inspire. I never observe in her any of those sweet emotions visible when the heart is affected; no blushes—no trembling—no hesita-



tions ;—she receives me with sisterly regard, but that is all.

I mentioned my fears to Mr. Meredith, and he advised me, by no means to tease Harriet with them. “ You will persuade her by and by, (said the old gentleman) that she does not like you, and has a heart to bestow somewhere else. As soon as my sister arrives, your anxieties will have an end. I cannot with propriety dispose of my child’s hand till her return ; but I only wait for that ; and I know Harriet’s principles and goodness of heart so well, that I am sure her husband will have no reason to complain of her coldness, if he deserves her affection.”

I believe Mr. Meredith is right, and I shall endeavour to follow his advice.—How ardently do I long for the arrival of this aunt ! My father doats on my Harriet ; but all the world must adore her. Stay where you are, Stanley, till she is my wife, then come and welcome ; for then I can trust to her principles and your’s.

ARTHUR WILLIAMS.

Miss

MISS MEREDITH, TO MISS MONTAGUE.

*Meredith-hall.*

CONGRATULATE me, Emma—my aunt arrived last night so amended in health and spirits, that I am all gaiety. Joy, my dear, has frequently the same effect as grief; and my heart fluttered so at the sight of this beloved relation, that had not a flood of tears relieved me, I should certainly have fainted. Mr. Williams was with us, and observed my emotion with pain. “Ah, Harriet, (whispered he) you *have* sensibility—you *love* your aunt. What would I give to excite such sweet emotion!” He politely left us soon after my aunt’s arrival, thinking, no doubt, that we must have a thousand agreeable things to say to each other.

My aunt mentioned Lady Bleville and her son, with great affection; she believes they will be at Cranbrook-castle next week. She did not know Mr. Williams; he went abroad, (if you recollect) about three months before we came to reside entirely here: my father introduced him to her, and, on his taking leave, she said he appeared to be a pleasing young man.

After breakfast this morning, my father desired to speak with my aunt in the library, I suppose,

on the subject of my marriage. I cannot account for it, but I have a sort of foreboding that she will not approve this match; she is neither fond of the country, nor of country gentlemen; and her strong affection for me alone, induced her to reside here so long. It would give me great pain should any difference in opinion arise between my father and her on my account: especially as I know the former never will relinquish a favourite scheme.

Perhaps, my beloved friend, you meant to please me by saying, my admonitions have more weight with you than your mother's lectures; but, if so, your design has failed: I will not accept a compliment at her expence; she is your best adviser—a friend may be partial and interested, but a mother can have no view but the happiness of her child:—she writes experience with parental affection—she is acquainted with the duplicity of the world—she knows what is likely to constitute happiness—and never will oppose the addresses of a man, who is, in all respects, eligible. You, my dear, have lively spirits; and, excuse me if I add, an ample knowledge of your own worth: consequently you are more prone to command than obey; but should not the ties of gratitude alone ensure obedience from a child to a parent? Can we ever recompense the tenderness, the various anxieties felt by our parents during our infancy?—and,  
when



when we grow up, are not all their thoughts engrossed by the desire of seeing us happily settled, that they may descend to the grave in peace?— Shall we then oppose their kind endeavours?—nay, act in direct opposition to their commands? O Emma, what mind endowed with sensibility, can bear the self-reproach incurred by ingratitude? But I have done with this subject—nobody knows her duty better than my Emma; and, if she errs, she errs against conviction.

\* \* \* \* \*

I broke off on hearing my aunt enquire for me; we have had a long conversation. “ Harriet, (said she), your father has much surprized and vexed me, by declaring he has promised your hand to Mr. Williams. I know nothing against the young man; he may have many good qualities, but my brother is too precipitate: I purposed taking you to town this winter, and giving you some idea of the world; in short, I had other views for you: but my brother’s hasty measures have blasted them. Tell me, has Mr. Williams won your heart? Do you wish for a connection with him?

“ Mr. Williams was my father’s choice; he appears amiable, and I love him with the affection which I think I should feel for a brother; therefore, being extremely unwilling to oppose my father, I have consented to the union.”

“ Very

"Very well, I see how it is—your father will have cause to regret his absurd scheme; for, I am convinced, you are going to marry a man to whom you cannot give your heart: indeed you have been wrong in encouraging Williams, when you did not love him; it was neither generous nor honest."

I burst into tears—"Indeed, Madam, if I know myself, I do love him: I never yet saw a man whom I so much approved."

"And how should you, child? Who could you see in this remote county of Caermarthen? But if you are determined to marry Mr. Williams, I have done. May you never repent it; and may my brother experience all the happiness he expects to derive from the connection!"

She left me with vexation in her countenance. Alas, should I be the cause of any disagreement between her and my father, it would make me very unhappy! I am summoned to the drawing-room.

Adieu! Tell your dear sister she is nearer to my heart than ever; and believe me,

Yours most truly,

HARRIET MEREDITH.

MISS

## MISS MEREDITH IN CONTINUATION.

*Meredith-hall.*

**A**T length, my dear Emma, the fate of your friend is determined: my father and aunt have had, as I expected, many smart debates; but he was peremptory:—"He had given his word, and the whole world should not make him recede from it;"—consequently, she, though extremely angry, was obliged to acquiesce: and, within this month, your Harriet gives her hand to Mr Williams;—pray with me, Emma, that I may never have cause to regret the gift.

Yesterday, in the afternoon, we had a visit from Mrs. Jenkins and her daughters, to congratulate us on my aunt's return. Mr. Williams dined here; and, tho' engaged in the evening, had not left us when they came: he paid his compliments coldly to them, and directed all his attention to me. Miss Jenkins bridled, played with her fan, and looked as if she thought herself slighted. "Bless me, Mr. Williams (cried the old lady) why you make yourself a great stranger, sure, since your return from your travels. Before you went abroad, we saw you every day. Well, for my part, I have no notion, because folks grow fine gentlemen, that they should neglect their old friends; and I must  
tell



tell you, Sir, you are neither civil nor grateful ; for I and my girls was always very fond of you."

Williams coloured, and bowing, said, " I am sorry, Madam, to be accused of a deficiency in politeness, and still more sorry to be thought ungrateful. I assure you I have always entertained a remembrance of your former kindness, but my time has been so taken up of late."

" O dear ! (cried Miss Jankins, with a toss of her head) pray make no apologies, Sir ; 'tis mighty indifferent to us whether you come or not :—we all know you are pinned to Miss Meredith's apron-string." Here followed an affected laugh, in which the mother and younger sister joined.

" You are very obliging, Madam, (replied Williams,) to place me in so agreeable a situation, which no man in his senses would wish to resign : but, as I unfortunately have an engagement which calls me away, I am happy to leave Miss Meredith in such *good-humoured chearful* company." So saying he quitted the room.

" I assure you, indeed, (retorted Mrs. Jankins,) he gives himself great airs ; but I fancy the gentleman will look rather small by and by. Do you know, Madam, (addressing my aunt for the first time,) that we have neighbours coming to Cranbrook-castle ? Lady Bleville and her son ; a very fine young gentleman, by all accounts ;

and as Mr. Jenkins knew Lady Bleville in her father's life-time, I shall pay them a visit."

"O yes (cried Miss Jenkins) we intend to be vastly intimate; for, no doubt, a young gentleman like Lord Bleville, will be happy to meet with people fit for his companions."

"I do not doubt it, Madam (returned my aunt gravely)—I have the honor of being intimately acquainted with Lord Bleville and his mother, and more excellent people do not exist."

"Indeed! (exclaimed Miss) I did not know Mrs. Melcombe was acquainted with them." From this moment, she dropped the subject, pouted, and gave me such disdainful, yet envious looks, that I could scarce keep my countenance.

\* \* \* \* \*

Mr. Williams has just called to inform us of Lord Bleville's arrival; he has been, it seems, to Bath, in order to see a friend of his, Sir Edward Stanley, from whom he brought a letter to Mr. Williams. On receiving this intelligence, my aunt ordered the coach, and desired me to accompany her to Cranbrook-castle. I am, therefore, preparing for the visit; and shall not close this epistle till my return.

\* \* \* \* \*

O Emma, I have been transported into a new world! Associated with a superior class of beings! —Alas, what a despicable creature is your friend,  
 compared

compared with Lady Bleville!—All human excellence, no doubt, is comparative; yet, surely, she must infinitely surpass every other woman: for even my aunt, whom I have been accustomed to look upon as the standard of perfection, dwindles into humble mediocrity by Lady Bleville's side:—mistake me not by supposing the latter derives this superiority from any assumed consequence;—no, indeed;—her manners were so affable, so unaffectedly polite, that they would have emboldened the most diffident mind, and could not fail of inspiring love as well as admiration.

“My dear Mrs. Melcombe (said she, on our entrance) how kind is this early visit—and by bringing your amiable niece, you leave me not a wish ungratified. I was prepared to love and esteem Miss Meredith; but, had I not heard her character, I could have been at no loss to discover it; her mind is so legible in her countenance.”

I courtesied with (I hope) a grateful look; saying “Your ladyship’s approbation does me honor.” I *was* pleased, my dear Emma; and why not own it? for, in my opinion, that person hardly deserves praise, who is not gratified by receiving it from the worthy.

Lady Bleville seems much attached to my aunt:—may she, on a further acquaintance, become as  
partial



partial to your Harriet ! She told us, Lord Bleville had waited upon Mr. Williams in the early part of the morning, and was not returned ; she, therefore, imagined he might be taking a ride round his estate ; however, said she, smiling, “ I do not regret his absence just now ; and, indeed, I shall try to shorten our stay here as much as possible—some anecdotes my son picked up at Bath, have given me great concern ; but in this life, we are frequently obliged to relinquish a favorite point, and sacrifice our inclinations to necessity.” My aunt and I attended her to look at the house ; ’tis a fine old romantic building :—she said, Lord Bleville had designed to make improvements ; but she should *now* dissuade him from it : this sentence was accompanied by a significant look at my aunt, who turned away her head, and sighed deeply. What the secret is between them, I know not ; but a secret there certainly must be, by several words which dropped from both. Just as we were going to view the grounds, Lord Bleville appeared : he paid his compliments to my aunt in the most affectionate manner ; then, turning to your Harriet, “ Miss Meredith, I presume, said he, and put my hand to his lips. “ I was prepared to admire you, Madam ; but I knew not it was necessary to visit Wales, in order to behold perfection.” I could not speak—a tremor

nor seized my frame—and never, I believe, did any body make a more simple spiritless figure than I made during the whole of this visit. I am sure Lady Bleville and her son must think me very deficient both in understanding and politeness; and I really am vexed with myself, and mortified at the recollection.

Lord Bleville has a fine person; his manners are frank, easy, and polite; and his countenance beams with candour, sensibility, and benevolence.

Our new neighbours pressed us much to stay dinner, which my aunt (to my great joy) declined; but engaged them to dine with us to-morrow. I think Lady Bleville said they should leave Wales in a fortnight; so Miss Jankins must be expeditious in making her conquest, if such are her views:—she is certainly handsome, and possesses a fine fortune—'tis possible she may succeed—and, if she does, she must be happy in such a husband—in such a mother!

As we returned home, my aunt asked my opinion of her friends. I told her I was quite charmed with Lady Bleville. “And my Lord, (said she) what do you think of him?”

“Indeed, Madam, replied I, hesitating, (why did I hesitate?) I believe—I dare say—he is very accomplished.”

“And is he not very handsome?”

“I think he is handsome.”

“Why

“ Why, my dear, you answer in an odd way—but as things now are situated, ’tis no matter.” She was uncommonly silent during the rest of our drive—I was not talkative—and, at dinner, we were both so much retired within ourselves, that my father observed it, and asked if any thing had happened in the morning to disconcert us. My aunt replied in the negative; and then told him, that Lady Bleville and her son had promised to dine here to-morrow:—soon after Mr. Williams came in; and my father invited him to meet our new neighbours. My aunt looked displeased:—what her reasons are, I know not, but she certainly treats Mr. Williams with great coldness, which he frequently notices with concern. He spoke much in praise of Lord Bleville, and (I thought) whilst he was talking of him, scrutinized my looks; he then called for my opinion.—I felt my face glow, and only replied, “ You have given my sentiments, Sir, in delivering your own.” He bowed, but looked grave, and often heaved a sigh: in short, our evening, for the first time, appeared dull and tedious; and I felt happy when the hour of retirement came, that I might enjoy my own thoughts, and scribble to my Emma.

’Tis now midnight, so adieu. Why dont you write?

HARRIET MEREDITH.

SIR



SIR GEORGE OLDHAM TO WILLIAM  
HERBERT, ESQ.

*Caermarthenshire:*

**I** SHALL soon see you, Herbert; be not alarmed; I have not given up the game, though this wavering girl makes a long chace of it. Now, however, I think I have her sure. Two nights since we had a private meeting; I was in heroics, fell at her feet—could not exist without her—uncertainty would destroy me—with various other flights of the same kind, which, at length, had this effect:—she gave me her honour she would never marry any other man. I urged her to go off with me—she replied, “It would be better for us could we obtain my mother’s consent; besides, my friend Miss Meredith is on the point of being married, and I have promised to attend her at the ceremony; therefore you must, at least, wait till that is over. Perhaps you may have business to transact in town, or at your place in the country; if so, take the opportunity of doing it while I am gone to Meredith-hall. In about three weeks you may return hither; and, during the interim, I will give you leave to correspond with me, under cover to my servant Mary.”

I repeated all my former vows, and promised  
implicit

implicit obedience to her wishes ; though I curst Miss Meredith most bitterly in my heart ; for why the devil should her marriage hinder mine?—but I dared not give vent to my rage, as here I am all tenderness and gentle soft persuasion.

I shall set out for London in a day or two, but quite incog.—my creditors must know nothing of it, or I shall be harassed to death. Faith I am not sorry for this *congé*, since, to say truth, my present abode is rather *ennuyant*. Till we meet, farewell!

Your's,

GEORGE OLDHAM.

THE EARL OF BLEVILLE TO SIR EDWARD  
STANLEY.

*Cranbrook-castle.*

'TIS now three days, dear Stanley, since I came to Cranbrook-castle; and, perhaps, I may repent the journey as long as I live. You, no doubt, are surprized; but the circumstances I have to relate, will diminish your wonder.

When I visited you at Bath, you may recollect saying, that your friend Williams, to whom you wished to introduce me, was on the point of marriage with a most charming woman, a Miss Meredith. I told you my mother was intimately acquainted with her aunt, and that I had, very frequently, perused letters from the young lady herself, which gave me a high opinion of her principles and understanding; but I did not inform you that my mother (strongly prepossessed in Miss Meredith's favour from these letters, and her aunt's representation of her person, temper, and fortune,) instantly conceived a wish to see her my wife. The proposal was made to me:—I replied, "that a matrimonial connection ought to be preceded by mutual attachment; that affection was arbitrary; and, notwithstanding Miss Meredith's charms, she might not prove the woman of my choice;



choice; and still less likely was it that I should prove the man of her's: I therefore desired the affair might be suspended till my arrival in England, when I promised to accompany my mother on a visit to Mrs. Melcombe. Soon after this came a letter from my steward, Thornton, to inform me that he had laid out the money I ordered him to invest which ever way he deemed most advantageous in purchasing Cranbrook-castle, near Caermarthen; a scheme planned, I dare say, by Mrs. Melcombe and my mother. We arrived in England—when I immediately flew to you at Bath: your intelligence respecting Williams surprised, though it did not chagrin, me; as I could not feel much solicitude about a woman I had never seen. I communicated the news to my mother, who, the moment she received it, came post to Bath, and intreated that I would hasten with her to Cranbrook-castle; assuring me, at the same time, she had every reason to suppose I had been misinformed:—her wishes were ever laws to me, consequently I obeyed; and the very night we got hither, your news was confirmed by my steward. Next morning I rode to see Mr. Williams, and delivered the letter you entrusted me with: he was at home, and gave me a most cordial reception. Indeed, though there is nothing striking in his appearance, yet his manners are so

frank and unaffected, that he seems just the man I should like to call my friend. After parting from him I rode about my estate for an hour or two, and then returned to the castle, when I was told that Mrs. Melcombe and Miss Meredith were in the grounds with my mother.—I joined them—but I will not attempt a description of a woman who possesses that kind of animation, that bewitching sensibility not to be expressed; and which at first sight captivates the heart. O! Stanley, Miss Meredith has inspired me with a tenderness I blush to acknowledge, yet cannot subdue!—She spoke little during this visit, though her voice was harmony itself; and the next day, when we dined at Mr. Meredith's, I discovered in her such brilliancy of understanding, joined with so much diffidence and gentleness of manners, that I am convinced the soul is a fit inhabitant for the lovely body. I was all eye and ear; nay I lost, in my admiration of her, the idea that she was destined for another; till, during the course of conversation, Mr. Meredith mentioned something about his daughter's marriage; this roused me from a pleasing delirium—I started, and gazing at the charming Harriet, saw her cheeks suffused with blushes; and I thought I perceived traces of melancholy on her brow. Turning from her I met Williams's eyes, which seemed to express uneasiness

uneasiness and curiosity. I felt the colour mount into my face, and attempted to conceal my emotion, by chattering with Mrs. Melcombe on indifferent subjects; but the effort was vain; topics did not occur, and I sunk into a deep reverie. Williams too was thoughtful and spiritless:—at length the old gentleman, finding conversation flag, and general gravity prevail, desired his daughter to give us a lesson on her harp; she instantly complied, and struck the wires in so angelic a manner, that I fancied, for a moment, Cecilia had again descended upon earth. As we returned home, my mother asked me what I thought of Miss Meredith. “That she is (replied I) the most amiable creature I ever met with; words would neither do justice to her charms, nor to my admiration of them: but I must quit this country; for I should despise myself if I had the slightest wish to endeavour at supplanting Williams; and, were I to stay here, that must be the case. You know, madam, it was my purpose to have spent a few weeks at Paris, in my way from Italy; but, to oblige you, I relinquished the plan: now, however, let me conjure you, do not oppose my going; ’tis the only chance I have of regaining my tranquillity.” My mother wept. “Pursue your inclinations, my dear Charles, (said she) but never



never shall I forgive myself for exposing you to this hard trial."

Were my mind at ease, Stanley, I could dwell for hours on the beauties of the country I now inhabit; the rides are enchantingly romantic, and the view of the river, the boldness of the hills, and the richness of the vallies, all together form a landscape truly picturesque: indeed, I think no part of Great Britain can afford more gratification to a painter's eye, than the environs of Caermarthen. My house is about three miles from that town, and an equal distance from Meredith-hall. There are several genteel families in the neighbourhood, all of whom have favoured me with their notice; and to whom I shall, to-morrow, make a circle of morning visits.

Next week I purpose leaving Wales, and the week after Miss Meredith gives her hand to Williams. Remain at Bath, Stanley; do not trust yourself with the wife of your friend; for though reason and honour may subdue attachment, the heart must suffer for it.—Farewell! and believe me

Ever your's,

BLEVILLE.

P. S. Thanks for the few lines I have just received. I sincerely condole with you on the death of your brother; 'tis an event you expected, and therefore must be prepared to meet. Yet who  
can

can for ever close the eyes of those they love, without feeling a pang whose anguish time alone will mitigate?—Poor Colonel Stanley! he, indeed, affords a striking lesson to the gay and thoughtless libertine, who prefers unjustifiable connections with worthless women, to an honourable union with the good and virtuous. Pardon me, my friend; had not your letter put this observation in my way, I should not have made it; for, like yourself, I respected Colonel Stanley's amiable qualities, and who would not now wish to draw a veil over his errors?

## MISS MEREDITH TO MISS MONTAGUE.

*Meredith-ball.*

**N**EVER, my dearest Emma, did I feel myself so humbled, so lessened in my own eyes, as by the contents of your last letter\*. How meanly must you think of your friend, if you suppose her capable of cherishing sentiments in Lord Bleville's favour, which militate against her solemn, her voluntary promise to Mr. Williams! You say, "Lord Bleville is my kindred mind," and from thence infer that I must love him:—his native dignity, his graceful manners, and the high opinion my aunt has long given me of his principles and understanding, all conspire to command my respect and esteem; but, if I know my heart, it feels not in his favour any sentiment of a more tender kind: and yet you make me tremble! "From whence, you say, proceeded the tremour, the agitation I experienced on first seeing this man?" O, Emma! were I capable of deceiving Mr. Williams, and promising to him that affection which I had previously bestowed on another, what an infamous creature should I be! but I have examined my heart—closely examined it—and I dis-

\* This letter does not appear.



cover no lurking tenderness, no foundation for your fears; besides, Lord Bleville does not seem to entertain the smallest preference for me; and, I declare to you, there are few things from whence I should derive greater pleasure, than from saluting you by the title of Lady Bleville. Come then, my dear, favour me with your company at the Hall previous to a certain ceremony—a ceremony, alas, that must fix the colour of my fate for life! come and pierce, with your bright eyes, the heart of this young Earl. Would to Heaven a mutual attachment were to take place between you, and put an end to the anxiety I have long felt, my friend, on your account!—One shade alone obscures your character;—how fortunate would be an event which could not fail of restoring it to its native lustre!

“A certain *impertinent*, you say, is gone to London, by your command;” O, Emma! could I command him, he never should return to this county!

I am sent for—Lady Bleville is in my aunt’s dressing-room.

\* \* \* \*

What a conversation have I to relate!—Good Heaven! I am still so agitated, I know not how to begin with any kind of composure.

When I entered my aunt’s apartment, I thought

both she and Lady Bleville looked hurried and anxious; the thought was momentary:—I paid my compliments to her Ladyship, which she received with the utmost kindness; and then, after two or three common observations, taking my hand, “My dear Miss Meredith, (said she) this visit is to you; indulge me with a little conversation. Short as our acquaintance has been, I have observed uncommon openness in your disposition; pardon this liberty, and let maternal anxiety plead my excuse for what I am going to say.” Her preface surprised me; I only bowed, and listened in silent wonder. She proceeded:—“During my intimacy with Mrs. Melcombe, I have frequently been favoured with a sight of your letters to her; and, need I add, they impressed my mind with the highest esteem and respect for you? These sentiments were strengthened by all I heard from your aunt, relative to the child of her heart. I have a son, the best, the noblest of men; I had often looked forward to his marriage as an event which must confirm or destroy his happiness for ever: on his choice of a wife, depended all. Your character, my dear, my great regard for Mrs. Melcombe, and her intire ignorance of your father’s intentions, all led me to hope that my son would find in you the person capable of ensuring his felicity and mine.”

Think,

Think, Emma, what a situation was your friend's! I coloured—heaved an involuntary sigh—and stammered out, “Your Ladyship did me too much honour.”

“No, my dear, I only did you justice; of this I was well assured the first moment I saw you: but, to go on;—scarcely had we reached England, before my son was told you were on the eve of marriage; this surprized him, and I gave no credit to the report, as it was not confirmed, or even mentioned, by Mrs. Melcombe: however, I desired my son to hasten with me into Caermarthenshire; he complied; and, on our arrival at the castle, we soon heard the information he had received was but too authentic. I intended paying my compliments to Mrs. Melcombe, in order to have my few remaining doubts removed, when she politely came to me—You accompanied her, and must, I think, have discerned how much I was struck by your person and manners. I felt and looked delighted; your aunt observed it; and in a whisper said. “Alas, our scheme is over.” I was grieved and disappointed; for so willing are we to believe what we wish, that, till this moment, I had flattered myself report might be a liar. I now hoped to prevent my son from seeing you, well knowing the impression that must follow; but this hope was vain. Would to



Heaven I had never come to Wales! Miss Meredith, you are affected—let me hasten to conclude. My son, short as your knowledge of each other has been, adores you, and never will, he says, unite himself with any other woman: therefore, his peace and mine must of course be broken up. Desponding and miserable, I opened my heart to your aunt, who advised me to acquaint you with my son's attachment. And now, my dear, answer me, I conjure you, one question: "Are your affections really bestowed on Mr. Williams, or is it only in compliance with your father's desire, that you have consented to marry him?"

Never, Emma, did I feel myself so embarrassed as by this question! I wept—hesitated—and could not, without difficulty, articulate my words.

"Pardon my confusion, Madam, (said I), the intelligence you have communicated was so unexpected, so distressing; and the question you have asked is what I scarcely thought of asking myself before I engaged my hand. Accustomed from infancy to obey my father's will, I was not prepared to make objections to it; my aunt was not here to be consulted; and all I saw of Mr. Williams, confirmed my father's opinion of his merit. What then could I do? That my heart would have sought him out, and that he would have been the object of my choice, had he not been recommended

mended by my father, I pretend not to say: but I sincerely esteem Mr. Williams; I have consented to become his; and I shall think it my duty in future to study his happiness."

"Amiable girl! (exclaimed the Countess), how great is your merit—how severe is our loss!"

"But perhaps, my dear, (said my aunt), if your father knew that your affections are not interested in this match, which certainly is the case, his regard to your peace, and the prospect of a still more advantageous connection, might induce him to alter his mind."

What, Madam, and forfeit his honour to Mr. Williams! Never, I hope, on any consideration, will my father be tempted to break his word when solemnly pledged: besides, what has Sir Rowland? What has Mr. Williams done to deserve it? and how capricious, how weak must I appear, could I retract from my engagements at a time when settlements are made, when every preparation is finished, and the day near at hand! No; I would rather sacrifice my peace, I would rather die than pain my father's heart, or treat Mr. Williams with indignity he has not deserved."

Lady Bleville rose. "Charming good young creature, (cried she), may your happiness be equal to your merit! My regrets are heightened, but my reason is convinced; and I take shame to myself

or having endeavoured to cast one shade on a character so bright as your's. Adieu, amiable Miss Meredith! a few days, and I shall quit this country, with sorrow and disappointment, I confess; but with the most perfect admiration for you.

Avoid my son as much as is possible, without particularity: the more he sees of you, the greater must be his struggles." She put her handkerchief to her eyes; mine were not dry, and my aunt's overflowed. I kissed the hand of each without speaking, and hurried from them.

I have now, my Emma, given you a faithful account of this extraordinary conversation. Never did astonishment equal mine on hearing that Lord Bleville loved me. I had not the slightest suspicion of it; and the knowledge gives me infinite pain. To be the cause of unhappiness to so deserving, so amiable a man, is beyond my fortitude to support. Had he arrived before Mr. Williams; but even that could not have availed; my father's word was given to Sir Rowland. Why did my aunt expose me to this severe trial? Her remonstrances had no effect upon my father; and were mine likely to be more successful, even though I had suffered myself to be dazzled by the splendid prospects offered to my view; no, I should have gained nothing but his displeasure and contempt.

Hasten



Hasten to me, Emma. My heart, for the first time, is uneasy and dissatisfied. Your presence will restore peace to

Your

HARRIET MEREDITH.

ARTHUR

ARTHUR WILLIAMS, ESQ. TO SIR EDWARD  
STANLEY.

DEAR STANLEY,

**Y**OUR friend, Lord Bleville, leaves us on Saturday; and, if I am not much mistaken, wishes he had never come to Wales. Yes, Stanley; I see, in every look and action, that he doats on my charming Harriet; yet I see it with compassion and respect, for he endeavours to disguise his feelings; still, Harriet, I am certain, has discovered them, as she constantly avoids him if possible; and, when he addresses her, answers with politeness indeed, but her replies are cold and reserved: from my soul I wish we had never seen him! for though I have the firmest reliance on his honour, and though I am sure Harriet discourages him, yet she betrays a consciousness when he is present which does not please me: in short, Stanley, I feel that, "in the midst of happiness, the sighing heart will remind us of imperfection."

Next Tuesday is the time appointed to make me as blessed as mortal can be. Mr. Meredith, at my earnest entreaty, named the day, and the dear object of my wishes made no objection. O, Stanley, how ardent will be my endeavours

to

to promote her happiness! a selfish employ no doubt, since in her's only can I find my own.

Is it not singular, so attached as Mrs. Melcombe is to Lady Bleville; so fond as that Lady appears to be both of her and Harriet, that not one attempt should have been made, on Mrs. Melcomb's part, to detain her noble friends another week at Cranbrook? and does not their hasty departure prove I am right in my opinion of Lord Bleville's sentiments?

I flatter myself, Stanley, I shall, in a short time, receive a visit from you. Change of scene will raise your spirits: and, if you feel inclined to a flirtation, Miss Meredith expects to-morrow a friend of her's, Miss Montague, *qui pourroit bien vous faire voir du pays.*

I have this moment been told, to my great surprise, that Mrs. Melcombe accompanies Lady Bleville to town.

Adieu!

ARTHUR WILLIAMS.

Miss:



MISS MONTAGUE TO MISS ISABELLA  
MONTAGUE.

*Meredith-hall, Wednesday Morning.*

**W**ELL, sister, here I am, safe landed, without having met by the way one knight-errant, or one *lover* in disguise. I was received with the warmest affection by our dear Harriet, and with great kindness by Mr. Meredith and Mrs. Melcombe, who, by-the-by, is so much altered for the better, I should not have known her. I verily think Harriet more beautiful than usual; there is a cast of tenderness and langour over her features which makes her quite enchanting: her father is out of his wits with joy, because Tuesday next he is to give his daughter to the man of his choice. Sir Rowland and Mr. Williams were here yesterday in the evening; the latter is really grown handsome and polite, and upon the whole, not absolutely undeserving of my friend. I never yet saw the man whom I thought worthy of her.

O Isabella, how completely humbled is your haughty sister, when she compares herself with Harriet! You can be no judge of her merit, without seeing her in her own family; so dutifully affectionate to her father and aunt; so mild and obliging to the servants; so attentive to every  
thing

thing by which she can render others happy. What a treasure will Williams possess! But I am not satisfied; I want, me-thinks, to have her placed in an exalted sphere, where her virtues may shine forth the admiration of all beholders. This evening Lady Bleville and her son are expected: Harriet appears to avoid mentioning them, and I do not name the subject; but, when I have seen them, I shall be better able to guess the state of her heart; for I am confirmed in my opinion that Mr. Williams never possessed it: I watched these lovers narrowly last night; and though he adores her, she behaves to him with nothing more than the mild regard of a sister.

I am quite charmed with Sir Rowland, and told him I should take him for my flirt. "Very well, young lady, you may say so now, (returned he), but when a younger man appears, old Sir Rowland will be discarded, and forced to hobble home on his crutches by himself: you do not look, my pretty one, as if an old man would be your choice."

This observation raised a laugh at my expence; in short, we were all very merry, and the evening passed off quick.

I have been examining Harriet's finery; she has a profusion of jewels; all her mother's, and all Lady Williams's—for what purpose truly?

to exhibit them in a few formal visits round this neighbourhood, and then lay them by in a drawer: but, were I in her place, I would make Williams take me to London: the man must be a fool not to feel himself highly gratified in having permission to conduct such a woman where she would be the general object of admiration.

I am going to dress; if I find leisure, I will finish this in the evening.

\*\*\*

Wednesday night.  
Adieu to Sir George, to Williams, and every other pretty fellow I ever saw in my life! What are you all compared to this man of men, this *rara avis*, this bewitching Lord Bleville? Positively, Isabella, I am delighted with him; and had he a heart to bestow, Oldham might chance to lose his love: but Lord Bleville is devoted to Harriet: spite of all his endeavours it is visible he says little to her indeed, yet the silent awe, the adoring eye, and hesitating voice, when he is compelled to address her, shew it more plainly than would, "the rattling tongue of saucy eloquence." But I know you like I should be methodical, so to order.

When Lady Bleville and her son arrived, Harriet led me up to the former. Permit me, Madam, to introduce to your Ladyship, Miss Montague,



tagne, who kindly honours me with her friendship."

"Miss Montague's friendship for you, my love, does honour to the goodness of her own heart. I am happy, (turning to me) to see a young lady who is so highly spoken of." I curtseyed. Lady Bleville is indeed a charming woman; but although her manners are soft and affable, yet there is rather an overawing dignity in her person.

Mr. Meredith introduced the Earl to me, saying, "My Harriet's chosen friend, Miss Montague, my Lord." "Your mutual attachment, Madam, is the union of superior minds: Miss Meredith has frequently mentioned the happiness she derives from your friendship."

"Indeed, my Lord, (replied I), the advantage, and, I fear, the happiness is all on my side: for the little merit I possess, is entirely owing to the precepts and example of my dear Harriet."

"Your generous acknowledgement rather exalts than depresses your merit, Madam: few people have the candour to do another justice at their own expence." He conversed a short time longer, and then joined Mrs. Melcombe. I flew to Harriet. "My dear, I am heart-stricken—What a charming man is Lord Bleville!"

"He is indeed," replied she, and changed the subject.

subject. But you want a description of his person. It is impossible to give it; let your fancy paint every thing that is handsome, manly, sensible, elegant, and engaging; and even then the picture will fall short of the original. Mr. Williams came in after tea, but appeared to no advantage when contrasted with Lord Bleville. What a pity it is that so noble a fellow should pine with hopeless love! Sure he is the only man who can be said to deserve our friend! and as sure as I am now writing to you, she loves him; but accustomed to submit her will to her father's, and thinking her honour concerned in fulfilling her engagement, she stifles the feelings of her heart, seldom speaks to this fascinating man, and hardly ever trusts herself to look at him: he is the picture of dejection; Lady Bleville watches his countenance with anxiety; Mrs. Melcombe appears thoughtful and melancholy; and Williams scrutinizes the whole group. I wish, with all my soul, *he* was a thousand miles off, then might our Harriet adorn the station for which nature designed her; but good night, my dear, the clock strikes twelve, so I will finish my letter to-morrow.

\* \* \* \* \*

*Thursday morning.*

I have had an interesting conversation with Harriet: it arose from my pitying Lord Bleville.

“ Do

“ Do not, dear Emma, (said she) dwell on that theme: you know how grieved I am at giving pain to a mind like his: however, I flatter myself the impression is but transient, and that time and worthier objects will erase it from his memory.”

“ Forgive me, Harriet, (replied I) and answer one question with sincerity.”

“ What is it?” cried she, with emotion—  
“ Should you, or should you not, if left to your own choice, have preferred Lord Bleville to Mr. Williams?”

“ My dear Emma, circumstanced as I am, how cruel is that question! It matters not *which* I might have preferred—Lord Bleville can be nothing to me; Mr. Williams must be every thing: I therefore strive to bestow my heart as prudence and duty direct: and let me entreat you not to say another word on this subject.”

“ My charming friend, how I admire you! Would to Heaven my prudence and resolution equalled yours!”

“ Exert them, Emma, and they will gain strength: in such an instance, to attempt is to succeed.”

I shook my head—I could not promise what I fear it is now too late to think of performing. She changed the subject.

“ Do



“ Do you know, my dear, that my aunt Melcombe accompanies Lady Bleville to town on Saturday? I had hoped for her supporting presence at my marriage; but I believe she absolutely hates Mr. Williams: he must be sensible of the slight she evidently intends to him by absenting herself at such a time; and my father is greatly offended with her for it. My aunt has been to me a mother; think, then, how severely I must feel the loss of her affection; for if she loved me still, she could not leave me now.”

“ It is impossible, my dear, that you can have lost her affection; she may be concerned and disappointed, but she must admire and honour you for the motives which cause that disappointment.”

“ Alas, (replied Harriet) I begin to fear I shall have occasion to exert all my fortitude—but nothing shall tempt me to behave in such a manner as to deprive myself of the consciousness of having acted right.” She then left me to go to Mrs. Melcombe: and now, Isabella, I shall conclude this long epistle, with my duty to my mother, and Harriet’s love to you.

If you are a good girl, you may expect another letter soon, from

Your affectionate,

EMMA MONTAGUE.

MISS

## MISS MONTAGUE IN CONTINUATION.

*Meredith ball, Thursday evening.*

SEE Isabella, how obedient I am, in turning  
journalist, as you desired.

I told you Harriet was gone to her aunt; in  
about an hour she returned to me with swelled  
eyes.—“Heavens child, what is the matter now?  
never did I see such solemn doings when matri-  
mony was going forward.—Why, you look like  
Melpomene herself—”

“Do not blame me; I have been with my aunt  
—I found her taking her clothes out of the draw-  
ers, while her maid was employed in packing  
them up.—I instantly burst into tears—she dis-  
missed the servant, and taking my hand “Do  
not weep, my child, (said she) this necessary se-  
paration is as painful to my heart as it can be  
to yours: but hear my reasons for it. My first  
wish was an union between you and Lord Ble-  
ville; I knew his virtues, and with him your  
happiness had been certain:—but my wish was  
vain.—I reasoned and I expostulated with your fa-  
ther to no purpose—I then hoped that Lord Ble-  
ville’s knowledge of your engagements would de-  
fend his heart from any impression in your favor,  
but again my hopes were vain.—”

“Spare

“ Spare me, Madam, on this subject.—What can be so distressing as to suppose ourselves beloved by a worthy object, when we have not the power of making a return ? ”

“ Alas, my dear, that power!—but I will not give you pain—To be brief, then : Lord Bleville is determined to re-visit the continent ; his mother would have accompanied him, but he will not allow of her fatiguing herself so soon with another journey ; he has conjured me to be with her during the first few weeks of his absence ; she has earnestly joined in the request, and can I refuse ?—Besides, I love not Mr. Williams ; he has blasted the darling scheme of my heart ; neither am I pleased with your father ; and were I present at your nuptials, I fear I might behave in such a manner as to distress all parties. You will soon have new employments, new duties, which must engross your attention ; and, therefore, my presence, for a time at least, may well be spared : but you must write to me frequently, my beloved Harriet ; for you are the dearest object of my cares, and on your happiness depends my own. Left in my charge by the sister of my soul, am I not in the place of a mother to you ? And oh ! should I not have been consulted as a mother in the disposal of your hand ? ”

“ I embraced my dear aunt, assuring her, that if this temporary absence must be, I would endeavour



deavor to reconcile myself to it: we then parted with mutual tears: but, indeed, Emma, this is a blow I was not prepared for.—So long away, so very recently returned, and now again to leave me at a time so critical!—Surely it is not kind.—What must Sir Rowland, what must Mr. Williams think? I cannot tell them her motives.”

“ My dear girl, (said I) you must leave things as they are: but do not make yourself unhappy;—and, for Heaven’s sake, do not appear so before Sir Rowland and his son, lest they should assign motives for your grief, disgraceful to you, and mortifying to poor Williams.”

“ Dear Emma, (exclaimed she) how much I am obliged to you for that hint; yes, it shall have a proper effect on my conduct.”

Noble minded Harriet! How I pity her! “ Pity her!”—Yes, Isabella, I repeat it, I pity her:—for be assured, she sacrifices affection to filial duty. ’Tis impossible to be acquainted with Lord Bleville, to see his excellencies, and know herself the chosen of his heart, without feeling the tenderest, the most painful emotions. Heaven grant she may be happy! If any woman on earth is capable of subduing an attachment inimical to her duty, she is that woman.

\* \* \* \* \*

*Thursday night, twelve o' clock.*

Sir Rowland and Mr. Williams supped here; the old man tipfy with joy, the young one all love and adoration. This family and the Williams's are invited to dinner at Cranbrook-castle to-morrow, as a farewell visit. Harriet, you may believe, would gladly be excused going; but, without an appearance of particularity, she cannot absent herself. Neither Mr. Meredith nor Mr. Williams seem much pleased with the invitation; the former, because he thinks Lady Bleville has been the cause of his sister's displeasure against him;—the latter, because of the Earl's too visible superiority over himself, and too apparent fondness for our friend:—so I suppose this visit will be a humdrum affair; however, there are some people asked who may afford amusement,—the Jankins family, of whom Harriet gave us a short account in one of her letters. Good night, my dear. I shall not resume the pen till after we return from Cranbrook-castle. Duty to my mother, love to you, &c.

EMMA MONTAGUE.

Miss

## MISS MONTAGUE IN CONTINUATION.

*Friday Evening.*

WE are just returned from the castle, where I have been tolerably entertained; thanks to the Jankins' family. The old man is plain and decent, (like what he once was, a wealthy tradesman) but the mother, and eldest daughter, are the greatest treats you ever saw. We arrived before them, and were received with more than politeness, with such visible emotion by the Earl and Lady Bleville, as plainly spoke the situation of their hearts; neither was my sweet friend unmoved; she trembled, faltered, and was scarcely audible in her replies to their compliments. To our mutual relief the Jankins's were soon announced; when in bounced the mother, stuck out in stiff brocade with roses on it as big as a fruit-plate, and this in the middle of August; flaring pink bows, green satin shoes bespread with tarnished gold flowers; and her head-dress, O Heavens! 'tis impossible any description can do it justice. Figure to yourself an immense load of black hair, for the most part false, decorated with such a profusion of pink riband, laced lappets, and diamonds, that the weight was too much for the feeble, scraggy neck to sustain; consequently this pile of ele-



gance fell from side to side, like the pendulum of a clock. An enormous hoop completed the lady's dress.

Miss Jenkins wore really a beautiful lilac lustring, spotted with silver; but, for the sake of propriety no doubt, and because the day happened to be intensely hot, she had put on a rose-colour satin petticoat, trimmed with silver fringe, and puffs of lace, which, from having laid some time in the drawer, were become as flat as my hand; her cap was pretty, had it not been pinned so backward on her cushion that it appeared to be falling off behind, and dragging all the hair after it.

Maria, the younger girl, was a decent figure—yet what foils were they all to our sweet, elegant Harriet!—After the bustle of curtsy'ing, seating themselves, &c. “I am sure, my Lady, (cries Mrs. Jenkins) I am most monstrously sorry you are going to leave us so soon; we shall have the assemblies begin at Caermarthen next month, and I am sure my daughter would have been proud of Lord Bleville for a partner; she dances very well I can tell you.”

“I do not question it, madam, replied the Earl, bowing, and should certainly have been happy to have danced with Miss Jenkins, had not indispensable business called me hence. What sins does good-breeding sometimes oblige us to tell!

I dare

I dare say he heartily despises the conceited girl; who, during this discourse, was examining Harriet from head to foot, and, now and then, honouring her with such malignant glances, as highly entertained me. Dear Miss Meredith, (said she) with an affected laugh, I'm surpris'd to see you here without Mr. Williams! I thought he was quite your shadow."

"We shall soon have the pleasure of Mr. Williams's company, I dare say, Madam," returned Harriet.

"Indeed (cried the old lady) I see no pleasure in it; I think he is monstrous rude; and I desire, Miss Jankins, you will take very little notice of him."

"Pho, pho, (said Jankin's) let's hear no more of this: 'tis very odd behaviour to entertain my Lady and my Lord here, with complaints against Mr. Williams!"

"Why, yes, (added Mr. Meredith) and 'tis a little unkind to abuse him in the presence of his intended bride."

I looked at Harriet—she changed countenance. Lord Bleville (who was talking with his mother, and Mrs. Melcombe,) gave her a stolen glance, and instantly, with visible emotion, turned from us to the window. Lady Bleville attempted to make the conversation more general; till Mrs.

Jankins, suddenly turning to Mrs. Melcombe, said, " Lord, madam, I hear you are going to town already, without staying for your niece's wedding! 'tis very odd; I wonder you don't stop to see her married!"

This observation was too much for Harriet's sensibility, and she burst into tears. Her father and aunt were extremely alarmed; Lady Bleville ran to her with the utmost tenderness, and my Lord made an attempt to advance, but turned short round and flew out of the room.

" Mercy on us! (exclaimed Mrs. Jankins,) what is all this about? Why I'm sure I said nothing to make her cry; every body observes how odd it is that Mrs. Melcombe should go away now, and so lately come down too——"

" Dear Madam, (interrupted Lady Bleville) change the subject, I beseech you; this amiable young lady is much affected by the thought of a separation, which very particular business, on the part of Mrs. Melcombe, renders necessary."

" For shame, my dear, (cried Jankins) how could you say such ill-natured things!"

The woman reddened, and was about to answer, when Mr. Williams appeared, and all was calm. He spoke to Lady Bleville, and then to Mrs. Jankins, who looked stately and only bowed her head; Mrs. Melcombe answered him politely,  
but



but coldly ;—Miss Jenkins played with her fan, tossed up her head, and did not deign to reply when he addressed her ; while Maria, afraid to be civil, said something so low it was unintelligible : he then advanced to us, but seeing Harriet's cheeks still wet with tears, he started back, exclaiming, " Good Heaven! Miss Meredith, are you not well? What has happened to distress you?"

" Nothing, (answered I) make no enquiries ; we are all very well, and very happy, now *you* are come."

" You are extremely good to me, my dear Miss Montague ; but is my Harriet indeed well?"

" Yes, upon my honour ; (replied she) and don't let your attention to me interrupt the harmony of the circle."

She attempted to smile ; and he, addressing the gentlemen, met with a reception so kind, that it quickly dispersed the surprise and concern before impressed on his features. Soon after Lord Bleville returned into the room, politely welcomed Mr. Williams, and immediately introducing common topics, prevented all further altercation.—Harriet gradually recovered ; but Lord Bleville never once trusted himself to look at, or speak to her—a conduct sufficiently expressive of his feelings :—but the shallow Miss Jenkins saw not thro' it ; and as he sometimes endeavoured to exert

himself, and address her, she bridled, simpered, played off all her airs and graces, and now and then bestowed such looks of triumph upon Harriet, as threw me into violent fits of laughter, for which I was obliged to account as well as I could, and assign some reason very different from the real cause, and such a one as should, if possible, excite a laugh in others; for, spite of every effort, Lord and Lady Bleville, Mrs. Melcombe, and Harriet, wore very grave faces. We declined staying supper, and were hurrying away, when Mr. Meredith, as the devil would have it, took it into his fancy to ask the Earl and Lady Bleville to breakfast to-morrow; they refused; saying, they would only call and take up Mrs. Melcombe; but he insisted so positively on their breakfasting, that, at last, they were obliged to promise. I was heartily vexed with him; and Harriet seemed extremely disturbed: the parting with her aunt will, I am sure, be enough for her, without the additional distress of witnessing Lord Bleville's struggles.

\* \* \* \* \*

Harriet has just been telling me how happy it would make her were a mutual esteem to take place between my Ladyship and the Earl.

"Esteem, my dear; why we do esteem each other, I believe; but his heart, you know, is in your

your possession, and you cannot transfer it to me ; his affections are too deeply engaged for that."

Do not say so, Emma, if you regard my peace ; you know not how cruelly I am hurt by the idea of giving pain to so excellent a man : I wish not for my own happiness more ardently than I do for his : would to Heaven he had never come hither, then I should not have lost my aunt." She burst into tears. " Do not torment yourself thus, my beloved friend, (replied I) your aunt will quickly return ; a transient fit of anger, against your father and Mr. Williams, is the sole cause of her intended departure—I am sure it is." She embraced me, sighed deeply, and quitted my room to attend this aunt who has given her so much uneasiness.

I am very angry with Mrs. Melcombe ; she must see how necessary she is to the happiness of our dear Harriet, whose conduct surely merits her approbation rather than her displeasure : and what has Williams done to deserve the slights she shews him ? Is he blameable for endeavouring to engage the hand of a woman whose universally acknowledged excellence promises him, in a connection with her, all the felicity this world can afford ? Surely Mrs. Melcombe has a narrow mind ! and her preference of the Earl and Lady Bleville to her niece, however worthy they may be of esteem, is



is my opinion, scandalous. I hope my sweet friend will be able to support this parting to-morrow. Good night, sister. My duty where due.

Your's,

EMMA MONTAGUE.

Miss

## MISS MONTAGUE IN CONTINUATION.

*Meredith-hall, Saturday noon.*

**T**HIS morning, just as I was about to quit my chamber, in flew Harriet, her eyes red with weeping.

“ Dear Emma, come down and take leave of my aunt. Lady Bleville is here—she came alone—she does not breakfast—but is now excusing herself to my father.”

I accompanied the dear girl to the breakfast-room. On our entrance Mrs. Melcombe rose, took Harriet’s hand, and, bursting into tears, led her up to Lady Bleville.

“ Dear, excellent Miss Meredith, (said the Countess) I could not deny myself the melancholy pleasure of seeing you once more. Very particular business has prevented my son from waiting on your father; but he charged me with his best, his most affectionate respects to him and yourself. May you, my love, be happy! to know that you are so will remove a heavy burthen from my heart.” She wept—Harriet could not speak—but, when Mrs. Melcombe embraced her, she sobbed aloud. At length words found their way.

“ O my dear aunt, my guide, my mother!

and will you, can you leave me? What will become of your child?"

"My best Harriet, compose yourself—we shall soon meet again—and the engagements you are about to make will amply supply my loss."

"Never! never!" sobbed the afflicted Harriet.

"My love, cried Mr. Meredith, (darting an indignant glance at his sister) do not grieve, do not lament the departure of an unkind relation, whose partial friendship for strangers has rendered her unmindful of the affection due to her own family. You have a father, my child, whose only care is your happiness."

Mrs. Melcombe seemed to feel the severity of this speech, and was going to reply, when, looking at Harriet, (whose tears flowed fast) she checked herself, and said nothing. Lady Bleville then advanced to take leave of Mr. Meredith, and bidding me be careful of my friend, she hurried Mrs. Melcombe away.

Harriet stood a moment speechless, and then sunk into my arms; and it was with the utmost difficulty we could keep life in her for an hour after the ladies were gone. What an unfeeling woman must Mrs. Melcombe be, to leave the dear girl at such a period! Mr. Meredith talks loudly of her unkindness, and no wonder: he is likewise offended with Lord Bleville for not breakfast-  
ing



ing with him this morning ; the poor old gentleman cannot bear to be crossed even in his most trivial schemes : but, for my part, I highly applaud Lord Bleville, and rejoice that Harriet was spared seeing him. She is now gone to lie down, for her spirits are sadly agitated.

In the evening, Sir Rowland, Mr. Williams, and the lawyers, are all to be here in order to sign the settlements. Sir Rowland's estate is about four thousand pounds per annum ; half of which he gives up to his son. He offered to resign the family mansion ; but Mr. Meredith earnestly requested his Harriet not to leave him ; and, as the request coincided with her wishes, Mr. Williams has agreed to reside at Meredith-hall. Harriet is to have fifty thousand pounds down, and, at her father's death, the Caermarthen estate, which is called fifteen hundred a year.

Sir Rowland seems a worthy man, and so sentimental, Bella, that he positively would do for you : upon my word you had better come hither, and try to make a conquest of the old Don ;—how you would both dwell upon every wise sentence our charming Harriet utters !—Heigh ho ! would to Heaven I could profit by the example she sets me ! but my head-strong passions lead my reason captive. Adieu ! Harriet has sent for me.

\* \* \* \* \*

When

When I came into our friend's dressing-room, I found her weeping over a letter which she put into my hand.

"Read that, dear Emma. Alas! I am very unfortunate! what would I not give to restore his tranquillity!" She burst into a fresh agony of tears.

I read the letter—it was from Lord Bleville; and, with her permission, I enclose you a copy.

"Pray, my dear Harriet, (said I) how came you by this epistle?"

"My maid brought it me just now; she says Lady Bleville's footman gave it to her as the carriage drove away. I broke the seal with a trembling hand, and the contents have affected me deeply."

"Ah, Harriet! had not things been settled as they are——"

"Hold Emma, I conjure you! Lord Bleville is the first of men:—but supposing it true that I might have preferred him to Mr. Williams, if left to my free choice, still, would not the applauses of my own heart have been a sufficient recompence for sacrificing a transient inclination to the happiness of a beloved parent, who, in every instance, has made it his study and delight to promote my welfare, and who only wishes me connected with Mr. Williams because he thinks him  
the

the man, of all others, most likely to ensure my happiness? Not that my father's wishes alone would have induced me to accept Mr. Williams, if I had not entertained a high opinion of him myself: to swear to love and honour the man we cannot esteem, is impious; but to reject the man we do esteem and have accepted, because a phoenix comes in the way, is, in my idea, basely dishonourable. That letter, when you have copied it for your sister, I shall destroy, and endeavour to forget its contents; only wishing to the noble writer recovered tranquillity, and a more fortunate choice: that wish will not be inconsistent with the engagements I am about to form."

She was summoned to her father, and I retired to dress. Noble girl!—well may Lord Bleville and Williams adore her! O, Bella, twenty times a day am I conscience-stricken;—but I am so entangled—Oldham, alas! has such power over my heart, that one word, one look from him destroys all my good resolutions—Heigh-ho!

\* \* \* \* \*

*Saturday night.*

Mr. Williams dined with us—every body at table looked melancholy—Harriet's sweet face was clouded with sorrow—Williams beheld her with evident concern—Mr. Meredith had the traces of vexation and anger remaining on his counte-



countenance—and, if my face told truth, it said my thoughts were not very pleasant. We did little justice to the dinner, and scarcely spoke but in monosyllables; however, when the servants were withdrawn, Williams tried to exert himself; he addressed his Harriet in the most soothing, affectionate manner; she answered with great sweetness, and endeavoured to seem cheerful. He then began a little *badinage* with me; saying, he had invited his friend, Sir Edward Stanley hither, that I might make a conquest of the young Baronet.

“And no despicable conquest will he be, (cried Mr. Meredith,) for Sir Edward has three thousand a year.”

“Well, if he is a vastly pretty fellow,” (replied I,)—

“As to that, (interrupted Williams) he is the handsomest man I know, Lord Bleville excepted:—he looked at Harriet—she blushed—and, I think, he sighed;—but, quickly recovering himself, “There were many ladies abroad (continued he) who admired Sir Edward; but I believe he is returned to England with a whole heart notwithstanding.”

“Well then, it shall be my care to steal the trifle, if I can.”

“The trifle, Miss Montague!”

“Yes,”

“ Yes, indeed; I think men’s hearts are trifling things; and only that one does not like to be singular, and go without a few monkeys in one’s train, the very best of you are not worth the trouble of a conquest.”

“ O, Emma, (replied Harriet) what do good girls deserve when they speak against their conscience?”

“ Peace, Harriet, peace! you who can give up the cause of your sex, and forego the dear pleasure of flirting, in order to settle *comfortably* in the country, as Lady Grace calls it, are not qualified to talk on this subject. For my part, when I marry, it shall be to one who will indulge me in all the dear delights of the town.”

—Here we were interrupted by the arrival of Sir Rowland and the lawyers.—Harriet hastily withdrew, and I followed her to the dressing-room.

“ My dear Emma, (said she) what a change will three days make in my situation!—pray for me that I may properly fulfil the engagements I am about to form, that I may ever deserve and retain Mr. Williams’s affection, and that no one else may be a sufferer by our union.”—Tears started to her eyes; and I fear she thought of Lord Bleville.—*A-propos:*  
—I have

—I have his letter to transcribe, and must therefore close this epistle. Harriet's love, and my duty, as usual.

Your's,

EMMA MONTAGUE.



THE EARL OF BLEVILLE TO MISS  
MEREDITH.

*Cranbrook-Castle, Saturday morning.*

UNABLE, Madam, to take a personal leave of you, and still less able to quit the country without unbosoming my soul, I implore your pardon for this presumption, the first, and I hope the last with which you will ever have cause to reproach me; and had not my mother's too great solicitude for my peace induced her to acquaint you with the situation of my heart, I would have exerted every effort to conceal from your notice an attachment which, tender and compassionate as you are, can only give you pain.

This day, most amiable of women, I fly from you for ever. I have already staid too long:—yet, is it a crime to be sensible of merit, and love that which we cannot fail to esteem? Your beauty, excellent Miss Meredith, might have dazzled my eyes, but never would have gained my heart, had it not been accompanied with charms of a superior kind—charms which, unlike to beauty, gather strength from time.

I have not unfrequently been led to flatter myself there was a similitude in our tastes; but, alas! it too plainly appears there is none in our affections.

tions, since mine are unalterably fixed on you, your's as unalterably fixed upon another. May you be happy! may your cup of joy overflow even in this world, and then I cannot be miserable. Yet I grieve for my mother; I feel her disappointment almost as poignantly as I do my own; she loves you to adoration. Pardon us, Madam, for having separated Mrs. Melcombe from you; I fear it has pained your heart: would that it had not been done! but my mother's spirits were so depressed, she wanted a companion, a friend.

Best of women, farewell!—You must, you will be happy!—Virtues, such at your's, are the peculiar care of providence. Deign to pity a man whose cruel fortune drives him for ever from all he holds most dear. Ah, no! rather banish from your remembrance every thought of the ill-fated

BLEVILLE.

Miss

## MISS MONTAGUE, IN CONTINUATION.

*Monday morning.*

**T**HANKS, dear Isabella, for your kind epistle, although the account you give of my mother's pain in her side has alarmed me; but I hope it will soon go off as usual.

Harriet bids me say a multitude of kind things to you in return for your affectionate wishes. Williams really seems a worthy fellow as times go; and before him she appears easy and cheerful; but I caught her this morning with swelled eyes; and I doubt the tears of the night equal the smiles of the day.

“ Harriet, (said I), you are unhappy.”

“ Pardon me, my dear, I am not unhappy, but I am pensive, no doubt; and who in my situation could be otherwise? What an awful day is to-morrow!”

Your letter was just then brought in; I gave it her to read. Her eyes glistened at the admiration you express of her conduct. “ Tell my dear Isabella, (said she), that it shall be my study to deserve her good opinion, and merit the praise she so lavishly bestows upon me. Sweet indeed is commendation from those we love! It shall be  
my



my endeavour to justify the partiality of my friends by striving to correct my errors.

Adieu! We are going to take a drive in the coach before dinner, and bring Sir Rowland back with us.

\* \* \* \* \*

*Monday night.*

We met with a little incident in our airing this morning, which afforded gratification to my beloved friend's humanity. Passing through a lane, we perceived under the hedge a girl, apparently about seven or eight years old, sitting down and crying bitterly: Harriet stopped the carriage, and called the child to her: at first she seemed unwilling to come; but upon Harriet's speaking again, (in a very kind voice), she advanced towards us.

"Who are you, my dear, (said Harriet), and what makes you cry?"

"O, my mammy, my mammy!" exclaimed the child, and shed fresh tears.

"Why, where is your mammy?"

"Gone away, and I am left by myself all alone; and I am so hungry—"

Harriet was affected. "But how long has your mother been gone? and who is she?"

"She sells songs and penny-books: we slept last night in the field here behind the hedge; but when I waked this morning, mammy was gone:

I ran

I ran all about the field to see for her, and then crept through the hedge into this lane; but she is not here."

"What is your name, my little girl?"

"Fanny."

"And where does your mother live?"

The child stared, and repeated, that mammy slept with her under the hedge last night.

"Good Heaven! (said Harriet), is it possible any parent could be so destitute of humanity; so devoid of maternal feeling; as to abandon a poor infant thus; but she shall be my care. Providence seems to have sent us hither to preserve this innocent from starving." She then asked my permission to take the child into the coach; I gladly consented; but Fanny seemed rather alarmed; however, in a few minutes she grew reconciled to her situation, and dried up her tears. We soon reached Sir Rowland's; his house-keeper, by Harriet's desire, fed the poor child, and had her washed and cleaned; and when she returned to us, she looked quite pretty and engaging, in spite of the miserable rags with which she was covered; but though we did nothing but ask her questions all the way home, we could gain very little information. She knew not where she came from, nor any thing relative to herself, except that she was always walking about; often very hungry;

hungry; and continually beat by mammy if she asked her for victuals: she said, mammy, when they came to great gentlemen's houses, begged meat of the servants, and then looked in their hands and told them they would soon be married; from whence we conclude mammy is a gipsey; but why she deserted her child we cannot discover; however, it was a lucky event for the poor girl, as Harriet intends to clothe her, place her at a proper school, and bring her up to get a decent livelihood. So much for the little *protégée*.

Sir Rowland and Mr. Meredith have been in wild spirits this evening, insomuch that I was obliged to call them to order. Williams looks all joy: but it is more visible in his countenance than his expressions: there was, indeed, a delicacy in his behaviour to Harriet, during the whole day, which I could see pleased her extremely; besides it enabled her to conduct herself with a modest cheerfulness.

Good night, Bella. Harriet bids me come into her room.

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Tuesday night, twelve o'clock.

Our charming friend is united to Mr. Williams, and may the remembrance of this day ever afford them mutual satisfaction!

As Harriet had desired the ceremony might be



as private as possible, we made no regular breakfast, but went very early to church; she and I in Sir Rowland's chariot; the three gentlemen in Mr. Meredith's coach. Harriet trembled extremely as she approached the altar, and her colour went and came so often that I feared she would faint; however, she recovered herself, and got through the office very tolerably. (Between you and me, Isabella, I think it is a tremendous affair). As to Williams, I never saw a man so transported; and the old dons had much ado not to cut capers in the church. When we returned, I insisted upon resigning my place to the bridegroom, and jumped into Mr. Meredith's coach, accompanied by him and Sir Rowland: they were both all rapture. Sir Rowland caught me round the neck—"Your pardon, my dear young lady, (said he), but I must have a kiss; I am only twenty to-day;" and the old man kissed me so heartily, that Mr. Meredith laughed and I scolded.

On our arrival at home, there was a general congratulation.

My dearest Harriet, said Mr. Meredith, God grant you happiness! and may you resemble your angelic mother as much in your conduct as you do in your person!" Harriet wept—she could not speak—but Williams took her hand, saluted it,

and exclaimed—"Every hour, every moment of my life, dear Sir, shall be employed in endeavouring to make your daughter happy; and may I prove deserving of the treasure Heaven has this day bestowed upon me!"

"Why so solemn, boy? (cried Sir Rowland); for my part I could dance a rigadon with Miss Montague if we had but fiddles."

"Very well, (answered I), remember Miss Montague accepts the challenge; and will certainly get fiddles some day or other, in order to see how gallantly you can perform."

This drew on a lively conversation during breakfast; after which we adjourned to the music-room: Harriet sat down to her harpsichord; Williams took up a fiddle; and I sung: we amused ourselves thus for an hour or two, though both bride and bridegroom played execrably, and at last put me so entirely out, that losing all patience, I vowed I would sing no more, and proposed a walk: we then sauntered into the grove, the day being very hot, and there I contrived to steal away, and give Williams an opportunity to "Pour sweet nonsense in the fair one's ear." I rambled about by myself till dinner-time, when we all met in the eating-parlour. Harriet scolded me for leaving her; but Williams thanked me by his looks. After dinner we left the gentlemen

men to their bottle, and retired into Harriet's dressing-room.

"My dear Emma, (said she), I have this day made a solemn vow—I have rejoiced my father—and I hope contributed to the happiness of a worthy young man; but O, my dear friend, there are circumstances even in the most promising marriages, sufficient to fill a thinking mind with dread; how then can women of any delicacy enter into clandestine connections?"

I felt this pat on the cheek, and observed that every woman had not her nice feelings; and that the caprice of parents, their ambitious views, and obstinate prejudices in disfavour of some particular object, frequently drove young people into measures which their own hearts condemned.

"It may be so, (replied she), but nine times out of ten the parent is right on these occasions. Young people are too apt to be governed by appearances; and when once an attachment has taken place, they seek every means to justify their prepossession, and are insensibly drawn on to errors they would once have thought themselves incapable of committing."

"Well, Harriet, (replied I very peevishly), you, no doubt, are qualified to advise; for you, I am confident, have sacrificed inclination to duty; but every girl has not your heroism."



"Your observation, Emma, is neither delicate nor generous; but if I know my own heart, my inclinations accord with my duty; never yet were they separated; but let us change the subject."

I threw my arms round her—"Pardon me, my beloved friend! I was fretful; I was even resentful; but forgive me! you are in all things my superior."

She embraced me. "Perhaps, dear Emma, I should ask your pardon for my seriousness; but let us go into the music-room, and oblige me with your favourite air."

I followed her, and we were soon joined by Williams. After tea Mr. Meredith told Sir Rowland he ought not to forget a young lady's challenge, and as Williams could play a tune, he saw no reason against a dance. Sir Rowland instantly seized my hand, and we hobbled a minuet together; for I assured him rigadoons were out of fashion before I learned to dance: he really acquitted himself very decently; and I insisted upon his taking out the bride: she rose, and notwithstanding the agitation of her spirits, danced most gracefully. I told Williams he played out of time. "Look at that angel, (answered he), and rather wonder I can play at all."

We spent a cheerful evening every thing considered; and at eleven I attended Harriet to her dressing-

dressiug-room, where I stayed till she was undressed, and then retired to give you the transactions of the day, which I shall send off to-morrow morning.

I hope to hear my mother is better; my duty to her; and believe me,

Ever your's,

EMMA MONTAGUE.

MRS. WILLIAMS TO MRS. MELCOMBE.

*Meredith-hall.*

LAST Tuesday, my dear aunt, united me to Mr. Williams—how much did I wish for your supporting presence on that day! Miss Montague, indeed, was very kind and indulgent; but still I sighed for you; neither can I enjoy perfect happiness till you are with me. Mr. Williams is every thing I can desire; so tenderly attentive that he anticipates all my wishes: tomorrow he expects his friend, Sir Edward Stanley, on whom he has a design in favour of Miss Montague; I say, *in favour*, because, should they prove agreeable to each other, his character, family, and fortune, would render him a very desirable match.

I hope Lady Bleville and her worthy son are well; be kind enough to present my best respects to them, and assure the former I shall ever remain deeply grateful for the esteem with which she honours me: I must indulge myself in hoping I shall one day meet her again without any unpleasant remembrances—the *idea* adds to my felicity; what then would the *reality* do!

Pardon me, my dear aunt, if I repeat how much I desire your presence. How lazily did the  
months



months pass while you were abroad! how anxiously did I wait for every post-day! and then, when my wishes were gratified by your return, even before I had time to express my joy, you deserted me again. Ah, Madam, it was a painful stroke! and your Harriet felt it to the bottom of her soul. Surely I never needed my guide, my monitress, more than at this period, when I have newly entered a state of life with which I am unacquainted:—at present, indeed, the path before me seems smooth and delightful; but who knows what snares may be in the way; what dangers I may fall into without an experienced conductress to direct my steps at first!—Yet, perhaps, I am too selfish. You, my dear Madam, are in the midst of the gay world; a world your Harriet has no desire to see; the quiet, the sequestered life ever was my choice; but it is not so with you:—calculated to shine in brilliant and extensive circles, you ever loved to mix universally; therefore, in strict justice, I ought rather to feel myself grateful for the years you sacrificed to the care of my infancy, than selfishly wish to draw you from the world again. I will not therefore indulge a repining spirit—I will rest satisfied with the share of happiness allotted me, and content myself with opening my heart to you on all occasions.

Farewell, my revered instructress, my mother,  
my friend! to merit the continuance of your  
love and esteem, is the first wish of

Your ever dutiful, affectionate, and obliged,

HARRIET WILLIAMS.

MISS MONTAGUE TO MISS ISABELLA  
MONTAGUE.

*Meredith-hall.*

DEAR BELLA,

**T**HIS redoubtable Sir Edward Stanley arrived yesterday. Williams was summoned to his father's in the afternoon, and returned, accompanied by his friend. Sir Edward has quite the appearance of a man of fashion, but his gravity and wisdom frightened me to death.

"Behold (said Williams, leading him up to Harriet,) the dear creature to whom I am indebted for all my felicity. My love, let me solicit your esteem for Sir Edward Stanley."

"His being your friend must, of itself, entitle him to my esteem, did not his own merit command it."

"You do me honour, Madam, (replied Sir Edward) and I will endeavour to deserve esteem so valuable. My dear Williams, I can wish you nothing better than a continuance of your present felicity." He appeared greatly struck with Harriet. Williams then brought him up to me, saying, "Now, Stanley, I'll introduce you to



the charming Miss Montague; but take care of yourself; there's magic in her eyes."

" 'Tis impossible (answered he) to apprehend danger from so fair an enemy."

" Well, (cried Williams) I have given you warning, therefore look to the consequence."

" And pray (replied I) how came you acquainted with the mischief you pretend to foretell in my eyes? I really don't recollect you ever vouchsafed to look at them—my life for it you don't know what colour they are of."

" O! I had felt the power of beauty before I saw you; and this sweet friend of your's engrossed all my attention."

" Why yes, she is a little saucy monopolist, I know that but too well; and I think all spinsters should banish her from their society."

" A truce to your raillery, good folks, I beseech you, (said Harriet) and find some more agreeable entertainment for Sir Edward than this idle conversation."

Mr. Meredith then came in and welcomed Sir Edward with great hospitality, desiring he would take up his residence here.

" You do me honour, (replied the young Baronet) but Sir Rowland has put me into possession of his son's late apartments, and invested me with all his privileges while I remain in my present quarters;

quarters; therefore, I trust, a reception so kind, will plead my apology for not accepting your polite offer."

"Why indeed, as we have robbed Sir Rowland of his son, it would be unreasonable to deprive him of so agreeable a guest. You will be with us every day though; and, I hope prevail on my old friend to leave his agriculture and favour us oftener with his company."

Sir Edward bowed.—I am afraid he will make an intolerable bad flirt:—these men who have travelled, and seen much of the world, are generally so sententious, and so knowing in the little tricks of us girls, that it requires great skill to manage them properly: besides, Harriet's bewitching attractions lessen the consequence of every other female; 'tis impossible to do more than play second fiddle in her company.

After tea this evening, as we were all walking in the garden, Mr. Meredith asked Sir Edward Stanley if he had seen Lord Bleville before he left town?

"I saw him at Bath, (replied he) on his way to town: I believe he is by this time fat out for the Continent."

"For the Continent! why I thought he was come to settle in England?"

"He did intend it; but some particular cir-

cumstances require his presence abroad for a few months."

"So, then, I suppose his mother and my loving sister go with him?"

"I believe not;" replied Sir Edward, and changed the subject.

I cast my eyes on Harriet—she was visibly agitated—Williams looked silly—but pleasure brightened his features when he heard Lord Bleville was gone out of England. I enquired of our visitor whether there had been much company at Bath this season?

"I had few opportunities of judging, (answered he) for I was only twice at the rooms. *A-propos*, Williams:—Don't you remember, at Paris, a young fellow who was sometimes in our parties, and who called himself the only son of Sir William Forrester? I met him one morning at Bath, dressed extremely gay, with a cockade in his hat;—"Hah, Forrester!" (cried I,) how long have you been in England?" He looked confused:—"My name is not Forrester, Sir; I believe you have mistaken me for some other person." (I should have told you there was a lady leaning on his arm, and a gentleman walking with him.) "Not Forrester, Sir! I beg your pardon—but I must be greatly deceived by a resemblance indeed, if I had not the pleasure of seeing you very lately in France—under that



that name.” “ Then you *are* deceived, Sir;— I am but just arrived from the East-Indies:” and slightly moving his hat, he walked off. I ordered my brother’s servant (an intelligent fellow, who happened to be passing on the other side the street) to remark the gentleman I had been speaking with, and find out, among his brethren of the cloth, who and what he was. In a few days the servant told me that he went by the name of Monson; that he pretended to have acquired a large fortune in the East-Indies, as an officer; but that many people thought he was only a fortune-hunter, as he closely followed a Miss Harris, a city old maid, with a great deal of money. This intelligence confirmed my suspicion of his being the same person we knew at Paris; and about a week before I left Bath, an old friend, who called upon me, asked if I had heard the news? “ What news?” demanded I. “ Faith, (replied he) an odd affair is just come out, and every body talks of it at present:—A fellow, who called himself Monson, and pretended to be a man of fortune, which his appearance did not contradict, has, ever since he came hither, laid close siege to a maiden lady of the name of Harris, who is worth five or six and twenty thousand pounds:—“ *His love was amazingly violent—his whole fortune at her disposal—her money should, unquestionably, be settled upon her—*

her—but he could not wait for sending to town and consulting a parcel of relations—besides, he was in a vast hurry to get down to his estate in Cornwall, which suffered greatly from his absence.” By arguments such as these he persuaded the old lady to marry him, and they were united about five days since. But, two mornings ago, the bridegroom took the liberty to ask his lady in whose hands her securities lay? and where her fortune was placed?—After a little stammering she replied, that counsellor Truworth, who was then at Bath, had all her securities; and that, by his advice, she made over to him, in trust for herself and her children, all she was worth, the day previous to her marriage. This was a thunderbolt:—“ And have you dared to deceive me, Madam? (cried the enraged Monson) annul the deed, or, by heaven, I’ll use you like a slave!” She flew from him to the counsellor, who immediately went to Monson, and informed him, that as soon as he thought fit to make a proper settlement on his lady, her fortune should be given up. Monson cursed, swore, called his wife by every abusive epithet—and then tried to sooth and persuade—but all to no purpose; the honest counsellor told him, that without his property was ascertained, and a suitable settlement made, he would not give up a shilling. When the fellow found no money could be got,

he threw off the mask, and damned both his wife and Truworth; telling the latter, that as he had got possession of the fortune, he might keep the lady likewise. Monson instantly quitted Bath; and 'tis now said he has assumed many different names, and long lived by gambling; in short, that he is a notorious cheat. The lady, ashamed to be seen, has taken herself to London, where she may repent of her folly at leisure, and be thankful that she met with so good an adviser as Truworth."

"This anecdote proved I was not mistaken in the pretended Forrester, (continued Sir Edward) and shews us, Williams, how cautious we ought to be in associating with our own countrymen abroad, unless they are properly introduced."

Many reflections were made on this story; Harriet pitied the bride, but so did not I.

Adieu! for I am quite asleep.

Your's,

EMMA MONTAGUE

MRS.



MRS. MELCOMBE TO MRS. WILLIAMS.

*London.*

MY DEAREST NIECE,

**I** THANK you, a thousand times, for your letter now before me ; and be assured 'tis impossible for any parent to love a child better than I love you. Most earnestly do I pray for the continuance of your present happiness: I doubt not Mr. Williams's affection to you ; and Sir Rowland has my most perfect esteem. You are acquainted with my reasons for absenting myself from you at this period: you must make allowance for human nature, my dear, and consider how difficult it is to give up the favourite wish of the heart, and be cordial with the persons who have blasted it.

Poor Lady Bleville is in extreme low spirits ; her son left us last week, and, I trust, the variety of objects he must necessarily meet with, will change the course of his ideas, and enable him, ere it be long, to return to his native country, with a mind at ease : but if he remains at Paris till next year, Lady Bleville will certainly join him ; so that, either way, I shall be with my Harriet in a few months.

I am pleased to hear you are to have so agreeable

able an addition to your circle as Sir Edward Stanley; he bears a most excellent character.

Few young women, my beloved Harriet, stand less in need of advice than yourself; for so excellent are your principles, (" 'tis not with little vanity I boast it,") that you never can be unhappy through your own fault. You have prudence, generosity, gratitude, and every other virtue that can adorn your sex: you have felt the advantages of goodness, and your own excellent understanding will teach you never to forego them.

Lady Bleville bids me say for her every thing that is kind and affectionate to my Harriet, and assures me she never, on so short an acquaintance, loved any human being as she loves you.

Tell your valuable father, the severity of his words and looks, when we parted, dwells upon my mind, and gives me great concern; unite your entreaties with mine to procure his forgiveness, and believe me

Your most affectionate aunt,

CATHERINE MELCOMBE.

Miss

MISS MONTAGUE TO MISS ISABELLA  
MONTAGUE.

*Meredith-hall.*

**I** AM horridly mortified, Isabella—'tis impossible to make a flirt of this Sir Edward Stanley—he is so grave, and so sentimental, that I prefer Williams to him a thousand times over: besides, he is always at Harriet's elbow, reading to her, or entertaining her, (as she calls it,) with remarks on men and manners.

We have had an immense deal of company this week to visit the bride:—the Jenkins's came; and, as all hopes of Williams are now at an end, they behaved very civilly.

You ask when I intend to return? Next Tuesday, my dear, if my mother will send the coach to meet me at Colemore's farm. Harriet offers to convey me thither. I acquainted her, last night, with my intention of leaving the hall; both she and Williams pressed me, in the most urgent and affectionate terms, to stay some time longer: Harriet particularly begged me to return her visits with her; but I desired to be excused going through such a tiresome ceremony. The dear girl has been in tears this morning at my unkind resolution, as she calls it; but I tell her, if I  
stayed



stayed another month the parting must arrive at last, therefore I had better abide by my first plan.

Harriet finds great amusement in teaching little Fanny to read and work ; the child is extremely fond of her, and pays great attention to all she says. How fortunate is this poor girl in being under the care and protection of so able an instructress!

We are to have a ball to-morrow evening, and the preparations for that, and the supper, are extremely elegant. Mr. Meredith says he makes the entertainment in compliment to me, because I thought fit to give Sir Rowland a challenge. Never did a father doat more fondly on a child than Sir Rowland does on Harriet ; he even regrets that he is obliged to go about his grounds and direct the improvements, (once his hobby-horse) without having her to accompany him.

" My dear, (said he yesterday) don't you think, if you had a garden-chair, you could go with me? Would it not do you as much good as riding on horse-back ?

" Perhaps it might ; (replied she) and, if you wish it, I shall be happy to attend you."

He jumped up—and, kissing her, exclaimed, " Best and dearest of creatures! happy was the day, my son, that united you to this charming girl!"

" Happy

“ Happy indeed! (answered Williams) and I have nothing left to wish, but that I may deserve the blessing she has conferred upon me.”

He put her hand to his lips—she blushed and looked embarrassed—“ It shall be my endeavour to obtain the approbation of my husband and both my fathers.”

“ Well, cried I, to Sir Edward, (who sat gazing upon Harriet,) what say you to marrying and bringing your wife to this school? For my part I shall have nothing to do with it—you are all too good for me—when I marry I design having a will of my own—a small portion of the acid gives flavour to the matrimonial dish——”

“ But, my dear Miss Montague, (interrupted Williams) it requires great skill and prudence to mix that acid properly; one drop too much might render the dish unpalatable, and give a loathing to the stomach.”

“ In my opinion (said Sir Edward Gravity) 'tis better to exclude acids from the matrimonial dish, however pleasant they may be in others: besides, we generally meet with so many unavoidable crosses in life, that 'tis as prudent not to go out of the way in search of them.”

“ Bless me, Sir Edward, you are enough to give one the vapours! Come, said I, taking Sir Rowland by the arm, let us young folks walk in the

the garden, and leave the old gentleman there to proceed in his sermon."

Harriet laughed—"We will postpone the sermon, my dear, and accompany you, lest you should have a scheme of running away with your beau."

This little fally, and a pleasant ramble, put us all into good humour.

\* \* \* \* \*

I was too much fatigued to write last night, or rather this morning, for we did not break up till four o'clock. I never spent a more agreeable evening; every thing was conducted with ease and elegance; and the whole company seemed in high glee. Before our visitors arrived, Williams thought proper to lament the necessity he should be under, as Sir Owen and Lady Lloyd were invited, of dancing with the latter rather than with me; "But Sir Edward, (continued he) will more than supply my place."

"Do not trouble yourself to apologise, (replied I), for if I dance with a *lively* partner, (looking at Sir Edward), I care not who he is." Sir Edward's eyes were fixed on Mrs. Williams; but roused as it were by my speech, he got up, bowed, and said, "for once he should think himself obliged to *etiquette*, as it might perhaps procure him the favour of my hand." This was a polite



lite answer, yet the tone of his voice did not accord with his words.

“ Harriet, my love, (said Williams), I suppose you must dance with Sir Owen—have you any objection to it ?”

“ None in the world,” returned she.

When we were all assembled, Williams took out Lady Lloyd; Sir Owen, immediately on his entrance, had secured Harriet’s hand: and I saw Miss Jenkins look at Sir Edward Stanley, and throw herself into a number of fantastical attitudes; but, alas,

“ She look’d and sigh’d, and look’d in vain,”

for he was obliged to be contented with me; however, she got a very pretty fellow, a Mr. Jones, who they say is partial to her. We danced from nine till twelve, and then marched off to the supper-room, where every thing was in high style: mirth seemed to reign universally, and even my partner threw out a few occasional sallies; but of him more anon. After supper we returned to the ball-room, and danced cotillions till near three; when, by way of cooling ourselves, we commenced minuets. Williams declared his father and I should figure away first; at the same time telling the company, he owed the pleasure of seeing them to my having given Sir Rowland a challenge

challenge to dance on Harriet's wedding-day.—  
The old man was highly delighted with his son's  
proposal, and shewed me off to the very best of  
his power. As soon as we sat down, Sir Owen  
Lloyd led Harriet to the top of the room, when  
my partner involuntarily exclaimed, "what an  
angelic creature."

"Do you mean me, or Mrs. Williams?"

"Madam!" (replied he), looking like a fool.

"Nay, nay, do not gaze so ardently at your  
shoe-buckles, as if you thought they could help  
you out: I understood you extremely well—it was  
*the wife of your friend* you meant to admire."  
Had you seen his countenance you would never  
have forgot it.

"Madam—Miss Montague—I beg your par-  
don—Yes, I own,—it was Mrs. Williams I al-  
luded to, that is certain: you must admire her  
even more than I do, for you know her better."

"True; and there is no bar against my admi-  
ration, although she *is* married."

He arose immediately under pretence of fetch-  
ing some lemonade; but I see very plainly this  
grave sentimental youth is over head and ears in  
love with Harriet; and I verily believe, till last  
night, he was a stranger to his own sentiments.  
He rode out this morning before breakfast, (for he  
slept here), and left word he should dine with  
Sir

Sir Rowland—I believe he dreads to encounter my looks: if he really is the man of honour he seems to be, he will not remain long here, lest his admiration of Harriet should throw some acid ingredients into Williams's matrimonial dish.—Harriet, I dare swear, has not the slightest suspicion of Sir Edward's partiality; for no mortal ever was more unconscious of beauty than herself. O, Bella, were the dear creature in London, she would set the whole town in a blaze!

Adieu! On Tuesday I hope we shall meet.

Your's,

EMMA MONTAGUE.



THE EARL OF BLEVILLE TO SIR EDWARD  
STANLEY.

*Paris.*

**H**ERE I am, dear Stanley, arrived at Paris: I can give you no account of my journey, for I remember nothing, except that every step I took, seemed to tear my soul from my body, and anticipate the pangs of death. O, my friend, too much sensibility, too much tenderness, often proves our bitterest curse!

I have been visited already by some of my old acquaintance, for it was impossible to conceal my being here; yet their civilities distress me—I detest company; and am least wretched when alone. Professions of esteem which have no sincerity, and a thousand offers of kindness made only to be refused, are insipid and tiresome. What pleasure can there be in the society of persons whose sentiments do not flow from the heart? Stanley, dear Stanley, how I envy your present situation at Meredith-hall!—Tell me, does the angel ever mention Bleville?—Ah, no! perhaps she hates and despises me for my presumption. The letter I left, expressive of my feelings, has possibly incurred her everlasting displeasure. Madness is in that thought!—let me fly from it—and to divert

my ideas, relate a singular adventure I met with last night ; an adventure which proves how universally the cup of life is dashed with wretchedness.

Wandering by myself in the *Bois de Boulogne*, I had not observed the advance of twilight till it was nearly dark ; when, coming to rather a thick part of the wood, I saw an elderly man cutting down branches of trees for fuel ; he appeared emaciated and feeble ; but, though meanly clad, there was something in his air and style of dress which looked above the vulgar. Curiosity led me towards him. “ Friend, (said I), that work seems too laborious for you ; and who is to carry these faggots when you have felled them ? ” “ Myself, Sir, (answered he), it is what I am accustomed to, and use renders all things easy. ” “ I cannot believe you have *always* been accustomed to such employments ; either I am much mistaken, or you have known better days. ” “ Sir, (replied he in a haughty tone), you are a stranger, (an Englishman I believe), and you have no right to pry into my secrets. Go, Sir, your curiosity is troublesome ; besides, it is almost dark, and you will lose your way in the wood. ” “ Be not offended, friend :—I am, it is true, a stranger here ; but I hope no stranger to the feelings of humanity ; and it distresses me to think that a man of your age  
and

and appearance should be obliged to follow such an employment, and, unaided, carry such burdens. I speak not now from idle curiosity, but from a wish to render you service. I am myself unhappy, though not from pecuniary wants; and if you will put it in my power to assist you, or any other fellow-creature, you may reconcile me to a life which, at present, I little value." He advanced without saying a word; indeed, from his attitude, I expected him to strike me, for his hand was lifted up; but, suddenly, he threw himself on my neck, and wept aloud: my feelings were in union with his, and we both remained a moment silent—at length, "Generous Englishman, (cried he), are you indeed unhappy? have you no value for life, though blessed with affluence? come then with me, and learn to thank Heaven for the enjoyment of that good, the want of which has plunged others into wretchedness." So saying he took up his burden, (which I insisted on helping him to bear), and conducted me to the outskirts of the city, where we entered a miserable looking cottage, in which sate an elderly woman and two young ones making lace; they arose visibly surprised at seeing a stranger. "My dear Louise, (said the old man), here is a youth abounding with the gifts of fortune, and yet unhappy; let us learn from hence to be contented with po-



verty, which we have hitherto thought the greatest of all evils." The elderly woman sighed, and, reaching a stool, desired me to be seated; the young ones kept diligently to their work. Every thing in the house seemed clean and neat; but all, (as far as cleanliness could do), bore the marks of extreme penury.

" Now, Sir, (said my conductor), I shall entrust to you a situation which hitherto I have industriously concealed from all the world: your sentiments, and the benevolence of your looks, engage my confidence.

" I am the younger son of a noble family, and as usual, was designed for the church. My elder brother, at an early age, went into the army; and as my father's estate had been diminished by the prodigality of his ancestors, he had of course very little to bestow on his younger child. I made all the progress in my studies that might be expected from a youth of lively spirits and tolerable understanding; but unfortunately for me, just as I arrived at manhood, a brother of my mother's returned from the East Indies, where he had made a splendid fortune; he took a great fancy to me, and declared his intention of leaving me every thing he possessed: in consequence of this, all thoughts of my being in the church were thrown aside, and I was not sorry for the change, as my

uncle took me to live with him, and settled on me an allowance of two thousand livres a year for pocket-expences. I now experienced every kind of indulgence, and never felt a sorrow, but from the loss of my parents, and the coldness of my brother, who, though master of all the family estate, envied me my uncle's affection. One evening, here at Paris, as I returned from a walk, I met an old lady, accompanied by three young ones, all fine women; but she who appeared the youngest, particularly engaged my attention. Desirous of knowing who they were, I turned back and followed them till they entered a handsome house; when, stepping into a shop hard by, I asked to whom the house belonged? to Madame de Breffol, (replied the shop-girl), her youngest daughter, poor thing, is going to be a nun, that the other two may have better fortunes; it is a sad pity, for Mademoiselle Louise is the flower of the flock; the servants all adore her." This was intelligence enough for me: I had remarked, during my transient view of Mademoiselle Louise, a melancholy in her looks by which I was much interested: the next evening I watched the door; the ladies came out to get into their carriage, and I took care to make them a low bow, which engaged their attention: I then went to the communicative shop-girl, and after some previous discourse,

asked if there was any possibility of conveying a letter to Mademoiselle Louise? " Nothing can be more easy ; one of the chambermaids is my cousin." In short, Sir, by repeated letters I prevailed on the young lady to pay some attention to me, and by the chamber-maid's contrivance, I saw her several times, but dared not pay my addresses to her publicly, because my uncle had often said, the fortune he intended giving me would entitle me to one of the first alliances in Paris ; therefore I knew he would not hear of Madame de Bressol's daughter with little or no patrimony : besides, the young lady's mother had resolved to make her a nun, and in three weeks her noviciate was to commence. Madly in love, and inflamed still more by every obstacle that thwarted my wishes, I at length prevailed on my mistress to elope ; and as even the servant who helped forward our meetings was ignorant of my name, I flattered myself our marriage might be kept secret till I could find some method of reconciling my uncle to it. How blind, how headstrong is youth ! and how prone to rush on misery ! Our scheme succeeded but too well ; my Louise fled from her mother's house to Montreuil, whither, under pretence of going on a party of pleasure, I followed and married her : but being obliged to live a great deal with my uncle, who resided constantly at Paris, and thinking



ing every moment an age when I was separated from my dear excellent wife, I took a small lodging for her in the outskirts of the city, that I might spend all my leisure hours in her company. Louise, on quitting her mother's house, left a letter to say why she was gone. I enquired privately how Madame de Bressol behaved on the occasion, when to my surprise and joy, I found that she had quitted Paris, telling her friends Louise was settled in a convent. I now thought it impossible my uncle could discover my marriage—the income he allowed me supplied the frugal wants of my Louise; every day increased our affection for each other; and I was perfectly happy. My uncle often advised me to think of wedlock; but I made excuses from time to time; and being an old bachelor himself, he was the less urgent with me to change my condition. My Louise blessed me with three children, consequently our expences increased, and I was compelled to borrow money of an old fellow, who, knowing that my uncle designed to make me his heir, advanced whatever sums I chose. Thus we went on for a considerable time; but about ten years ago my uncle lost his housekeeper, and took in her place a smart lively woman of about thirty; very soon after she came, I observed a familiarity in her behaviour to the old gentleman,

man, and one day I spoke to her rather sharply on the subject ; she answered with great modesty and submission, but was from that hour, as I have reason to believe, my bitterest foe. One morning when she had been in the house about six months, my uncle called me into his library : “ Sir, (said he, in a voice tremulous with passion), I am told you have thought fit to shake off my authority, and break through every tie of gratitude, by contracting a clandestine marriage.” This sudden charge so disconcerted me, that I could not utter a word. “ Very well, (continued he), I find how it is ; you will therefore please to quit this house immediately ; go to your worthless wife, and see me no more.” “ Sir, (replied I), I acknowledge my crime in marrying without your consent ; but my wife is a gentlewoman, the daughter of the late Monsieur de Bressol, and had she possessed a fortune equal to her merit, she would have been far my superior.” “ Enough, Sir, (interrupted my uncle), then let her merit provide for her children ; the income I have already settled on you I should scorn to take away, were it in my power ; but expect nothing further.” Saying this, he left me. The housekeeper, as I found, had informed him of my marriage ; but how she came by her intelligence I could never learn. Driven from my uncle’s  
house,

house, I flew to my wife and family in such an agony of sorrow, that they soon discovered what had happened. My poor Louise shed floods of tears; I endeavoured to console her; though in truth I was little less affected than herself; but I had yet to experience another blow, a blow quite unexpected, for in a few weeks after my disgrace, my infatuated uncle married his housekeeper: this was no sooner known, than the man who had advanced me money, claimed the debt; and to avoid a prison, I was obliged to sell half my annual income. Reduced now to fifty pounds a year, I removed my family from their former lodging, and took this miserable cottage, where however we dragged on life without repining. I made several efforts to regain my uncle's favour, but all to no purpose: his wife brought him two children; and about three years since he died, leaving his whole property to her and them. I applied to my brother; but received such an answer as precluded all further solicitation; and being thus bereft of every hope, a torpid despair took possession of my mind, and I passed whole days in silence and tears: but from this wretched state, it pleased Heaven to rouse me by a fresh misfortune. Alas, where is the man who can say,—it is impossible for me to suffer more; my cup of misery is full?—Our youngest child was seized with a putrid fever, and



from the first there were no hopes. O my darling, my beloved boy! thou art happy—wherefore then do I still weep? I hung over him for hours—he would take no medicine but from my hands—I wearied Heaven with my prayers for his recovery—but in vain—on the fifth day he died; and that very night was I taken with the same disorder—yet, notwithstanding the agitation of my spirits, I recovered; though so slowly, that the expences incurred by my long illness, added to what we paid for the burial of our dear boy, obliged me to sell twenty pounds more of my annual income. We are now reduced to thirty pounds a year, and even that is ill-paid. My poor wife, unable to contend with poverty and affliction, has had a nervous fever for some months; however, thanks to Heaven, she is within the last fortnight somewhat recovered, and with her dear girls she endeavours, by making lace, to add a little to our scanty pittance. I go out every evening to procure fuel; I have changed my name; and no human being is solicitous to learn whether I am alive or dead.

O, Sir, you who have a feeling mind, may judge what a life mine is for a man of family; a man of sentiment! The low-born peasant, by daily labour, earns his bread, and tastes contentment—but the man of noble birth, unused to labourious

laborious occupations, and pampered with the luxuries of life, when he is bereft of friends, cut off from the prospect of fortune, and reduced to support a wife and children upon what would once have been insufficient even for his pocket-expences; when he is sensible that this scanty pittance depends on his life only; and that when he dies, those he holds most dear will be exposed to beggary and contempt;—think, Sir; O, think, what must be the reflections of such a man!”—(He burst into tears; but soon recovering himself, continued:) “There was something, Sir, in your air and manner of addressing me, which sunk into my soul—alas! it is long since I have heard the voice of friendship, or the soothing tones of compassion! The happy fly the dwellings of the wretched; and noble minds can suffer much before they supplicate the unfeeling sons of prosperity; for want itself is more supportable than obligation.”

O, Sir, (cried I), I am ashamed to think I ever called myself unhappy. Good Heaven, what accumulated woes have you sustained! and shall I sink under *one* misfortune only?—but it is in your power to fill my heart with joy—joy of the purest—the most exalted kind. I have a large fortune; to me valuable no further than as it enables me to do good to others.”

“ Hold, generous Englishman ! (interrupted he, grasping my hand, while the big tears followed each other down his pallid cheeks), I expected no less than this from your sensibility ; but the offer which you honour yourself by making, it would be highly dishonourable in me to accept : pecuniary obligations are humiliating ; and I have not yet been wretched enough to incur my own contempt. By unburthening my heart, I have given it temporary ease ; but think not I had any other view—no ; I abhor the idea.”

“ O, my friend, my brother ! (exclaimed I), are we not children of one common parent ? and have we not all an equal right to enjoy the good things of this world ?—Say, would not you, if our circumstances were reversed, make me the offer you now so unkindly refuse ?—I am sure you would ; and believe me there is less greatness of mind in conferring an obligation, than in accepting one graciously. Look at your wife, your children ;—would you deprive them of the conveniences, the necessaries of life ?”

“ Hold, hold ! (cried he), or you will drive me mad.”

His looks were distracted, and I saw it was vain, at this time, to urge him further : I therefore took my leave ; requesting that I might be permitted to repeat my visit ; my request was  
granted



granted with expressions of kindness ; and I am now planning a scheme to render the lofty wood-cutter happy in spite of himself. This scheme will, I hope, divert my thoughts from dwelling always on one object—May that dear object never know a pain!—but I will write no more. Adieu, Stanley! Present my—what—Shall I say *compliments*, when I mean *adoration*?—Give then any message you please for me at Meredith-hall.

Once more, adieu!

BLEVILLE.

Direct to my old lodging, for I am there at present.

Miss

MISS MONTAGUE TO MISS ISABELLA  
MONTAGUE.

*Meredith hall, Saturday morning.*

WE are all in the utmost consternation. Last night, at supper, Sir Rowland was suddenly attacked by a paralytic stroke. A servant came to acquaint Williams, who hurried away immediately. Harriet was terrified to death, and would not hear of going to bed, so I sat up with her. About one in the morning a messenger came from Williams to say his father was alive, but senseless; and at day-break Harriet determined to go to him, spite of all my dissuasions: I therefore resolved to accompany her; but, alas! we were too late! he expired about ten minutes before our arrival, and never spoke from the moment he was taken. My friend fainted on receiving this intelligence, which one of the servants delivered abruptly; and as for poor Williams, he seemed bereft of reason. When Harriet recovered, I entreated her to return home and lie down: she complied; and I am now writing while she endeavours to compose herself. Mr. Meredith is extremely shocked; he says his friend's death is a memento to warn him of the uncertainty of human life, and to prepare him for the

the journey he must shortly go. I am glad Sir Edward Stanley is here; he has recently been in affliction himself, and will therefore know how to pity and comfort others.

Harriet sends for me.

\* \* \* \* \*

Williams is just returned home, and Harriet something better; she sees her father's spirits are much sunk, and therefore strives to subdue her own feelings, and cheer him. Poor Williams looks very melancholy; and even I am not very gay: there is something so awful in sudden death, that it makes the most volatile person serious.—I must change the subject, or I shall become quite *triste*.

Yesterday Sir Edward Stanley had a letter from Lord Bleville, who is at Paris, and has sent him a pretty little novel in the *penseroso* style; he did not read all the letter aloud, so I suppose there was something in it not fit to be read. O these men! the very best of them are sad wretches when women are concerned.

Harriet said this evening, she hoped I would not now think of leaving her so soon as Tuesday; but as Williams, Sir Edward, and Mrs. Owen, (a relation of Sir Rowland's, who kept his house) will all be with her, I shall persevere in my first intention: besides, the late event must occasion a  
vast



vast deal of bustle, and oblige her to be continually at Sir Rowland's house, in order to look things over; therefore my presence here can by no means be necessary.

Mary will accompany me in the carriage, and Sir Edward has offered to be my escort to Colemore's farm; where, I hope, I shall meet my Isabella.

Your's,

EMMA MONTAGUE.

SIR

SIR EDWARD STANLEY TO THE EARL OF  
BLEVILLE.

*Meredith-hall.*

A VERY melancholy and unexpected event, dear Bleville, has put a stop to all our gaieties, and overwhelmed my friends here in the deepest sorrow. Sir Rowland Williams died suddenly on Saturday last. I sincerely lament his loss, as he was a pleasant companion and a good man. His son, now Sir Arthur, is extremely affected, but tries to exert himself, and keep up the spirits of his sweet wife, whose sorrow seems little less poignant than his own; for she loved Sir Rowland with filial affection. This event following so immediately after my poor brother's decease, has renewed all my grief; in short, Meredith-hall is the house of mourning.

Miss Montague, I fancy, is quite tired of us, for she goes to-morrow. I would not wish to make an ill-humoured observation, but surely she can have no great degree of friendship for Lady Williams, or she could not leave her at such a period. My acquaintance with Miss Montague has been short; nevertheless I will venture to affirm, her mind, and that of your enchanting Harriet, are by no means in unison; and had not chance  
thrown

thrown them together from infancy, I am confident they would never have been united by choice.

Thanks for the woodcutter's interesting story: pursue your benevolent scheme, and in the happiness of others, you cannot fail to find your own. The high value placed by the French nation on nobility of birth, is often productive of misery. To preserve the estate for an elder son, the younger branches of a family are beggared, and the boys constrained to go into the church, which debars them from the blameless comforts of a married life, while the girls are thrown into convents, and doomed to pass their days in fighting for the pleasures of that world from which they are shut out for ever; and all because a noble family must not degrade itself by any connection with trade.

Williams is going to town in consequence of his father's death; indispensable business calls him immediately thither; and his lady, because he wishes it, is to accompany him, though she seems much hurt at the idea of leaving her father. I cannot help wishing this journey was not requisite: Lady Williams has seen very little of the world; she never was in town, and therefore cannot be aware of the snares and temptations which (beautiful and inexperienced as she is) will, most certainly,



tainly, be cast in her way the moment she enters on a London life.

Do not laugh at my anxiety, for I am truly interested in her happiness. I presented your *baise-mains* to this little witch who has driven you from your country, and she returns her best wishes for your welfare. Adieu! believe me, sincerely,

Your's,

EDWARD STANLEY.

Miss

MISS ISABELLA MONTAGUE TO LADY  
WILLIAMS.

*Glenmore-hall.*

MY DEAREST MADAM,

IT is with the utmost regret I find myself compelled to give pain to your sympathizing heart, particularly at a time when poor Sir Rowland's death causes you sufficient trouble. But O! my dear Lady Williams, your Emma, my still beloved sister, is absolutely gone off with Sir George Oldham.

My poor mother is distracted—cruel, unfeeling girl, to desert such a parent!—I hardly know what I write, my heart is bursting between sorrow and indignation.

We had not the least suspicion of her scheme, for we heard Sir George had quitted the country; and we also flattered ourselves with the happiest effects from my sister's visit to you: little did we think she was mistress of so much art—for the day after her return she was remarkably kind and obliging.

Last Thursday we were invited to dine at our cousin Middleton's; Emma desired to be excused going, and said she intended writing to you; I  
only

only accompanied my mother: the servants relate, that Mary, my sister's maid, frequently went in and out that day, with small parcels, which must have been clothes necessary for their journey.

We found Emma up, and in high spirits on our return; she retired to her chamber at the usual time. Next morning when we went down to breakfast, Miller (my mother's woman) came in trembling, and said, "Miss Montague is not in her chamber, neither has she been in bed all night; here are two letters which I found on her dressing-table."

Before this sad tale was finished, my mother fainted, and remained a long time insensible; when she recovered, she clasped her hands and exclaimed, "Poor deluded, undone girl; she is doubtless gone off with that villain Oldham!"

I took up the letters—one was for you, my dear Madam, which I enclose; the other was for me. On opening it I found our fears realized: she intreats me to intercede with my mother on her behalf; assures us of Sir George's sincere reformation, and that her own happiness was at stake; and therefore she hopes so good a parent will not, by her displeasure, give a check to that felicity which her pardon will render quite perfect.

My poor mother was thrown into violent hysterics



terics by reading this letter, and continued so ill yesterday, that I could not leave her an instant.

This morning she desired me to write and send the letter my unhapy sister left for you. What can she say for herself?

That wretch, Mary, must have carried on the whole plan, for nobody has seen Sir George Oldham in our neighbourhood for several weeks.

I know, my dear Madam, this will be to you an afflicting piece of intelligence; to my mother it is a severe blow; for she is too well acquainted with Sir George's character, to flatter herself with hopes of his reformation.

Will you be so kind to inform us what the ill-fated girl says in your letter?

I remain, dear Madam, with the most perfect esteem,

Your sincerely affectionate,

ISABELLA MONTAGUE.

LADY

LADY WILLIAMS TO MISS ISABELLA  
MONTAGUE.

*Meredith-hall.*

**I**T is impossible for you, my dear Isabella, to conceive the grief and astonishment into which your letter threw me; for upon my honour, I cherished hopes that my imprudent friend had discarded Sir George Oldham. He must be the most artful of men, or he never could have subdued a mind like Emma's to a step so disgraceful. I cannot express to you how miserable I am, and how much I feel for the amiable Mrs. Montague; but, my dear, as regrets are now unavailing, and as your sister's indiscreet marriage must by this time be concluded, would it not be judicious, (supposing there is a chance that Sir George Oldham's love and gratitude to his lady may induce him to enter on a new course of life), for your worthy mother, in some measure to relent, and give hopes that a proper behaviour on his part, may hereafter bring about the desired reconciliation? but respecting the propriety of this step, Mrs. Montague's superior judgment must decide: and when we hear again from Emma, we shall better know how to act. I enclose her letter—it has cost me many tears.

We

We all sympathise with you, and join in ardent wishes for the recovery of Mrs. Montague's health and peace. Believe me,

My dear Isabella,

Your truly affectionate friend,

**HARRIET WILLIAMS.**



## MISS MONTAGUE TO LADY WILLIAMS.

*(Enclosed in the preceding.)*

**A**LAS! my dearest friend, (if you will permit me to call you by that tender name) how shall I henceforth approach you? and what language can I make use of to soften your displeasure, and plead the cause of a poor fugitive?

I dread the severity of your virtue—a runaway daughter I know you will despise—yet spare me, dear Harriet! my happiness was at stake; and I am persuaded I know Sir George Oldham better than those persons do who are so strongly prejudiced against him, and who will not believe that a sensible man may see his errors and reform. I flatter myself experience will prove I am right; yet I feel extremely for my mother—I lament the shock she will receive from my marriage, and I dread her consequent displeasure. You, likewise, who are an example of filial piety, you, perhaps, may cast me off; but believe me when I say, that notwithstanding I have the most perfect reliance on Sir George's love and honour, my happiness cannot be complete should my mother refuse me her pardon, or should you deem me unworthy of your friendship. O, Harriet! make allowances for failings from which you are exempt—for pas-

sions which too frequently shake off the dominion of reason. I own my faults ; I have tried to amend them, but I could not succeed.

Ere you receive this I shall be gone to Scotland ; why would my mother drive me to a step so disgraceful ? Mary will accompany me. On my return I shall write again to you : do not repulse me with contempt, but kindly plead in my behalf to my dear offended parent. Isabella is all softness ; she will, I am sure, second the petition. Adieu, my friend ! pity and excuse

Your

EMMA MONTAGUE

THE EARL OF BLEVILLE TO SIR EDWARD  
STANLEY.

*Paris.*

**Y**OUR letter, dear Stanley, arrived at a time when my heart was open to receive every pleasing impression, for I had just then settled matters with Monsieur de René, (my poor wood-cutter) in a way equally agreeable to his wishes and my own. I told you, when last I wrote, that I had a scheme in view to serve him; this was it: On my journey from Calais to Paris my valet caught a violent cold, and was so feverish when we came to Amiens, that I determined to remain there for a day or two, in order to expedite his recovery: I saw him blooded and put to bed; after which I took a walk; when, about a mile from the town, I perceived a very pretty white house, situated in a garden, with notice stuck up that it was to be sold, together with a small estate adjoining. Being struck with its appearance, I walked up the avenue of flowers which led to the house, saw the owner, and enquired his price, which seemed reasonable; the yearly value of the estate, he told me, was about four hundred pounds English money. I had half a mind then to have purchased it; but, on second thoughts, relinquished



the idea, as I had no intention of residing constantly in France. My servant soon got better, and I pursued my journey, without ever thinking more of the house, till Monsieur de René's refusal of pecuniary assistance recalled this sweet place to my mind, and I then resolved to write immediately to Amiens, and, if the little marquisate was not disposed of, to buy it, and place him there as my steward. Fortunately my application came in time; and as soon as I had secured the house and estate, I called on Monsieur de René, who received me with looks of affection and gratitude. "My dear Sir, (said I) I come to solicit a favour; 'tis in your power to render me service." "In my power! (exclaimed he), alas, how is that possible? I have no power of being serviceable to any man." "Indeed you have; but not to keep you in suspense, I have lately made a purchase of an estate near Amiens; I must therefore get some friend who will engage to reside there, and manage my concerns, on consideration of receiving four thousand livres a year for his kindness and trouble. You, my dear Sir, have no particular connections at Paris; and when we are without local attachments, 'tis indifferent to us where we live. Will you then (on whose probity I can firmly rely,) will you oblige me by taking care of this little estate? I shall sometimes be  
your

your visitor; and the place will have additional charms in my eyes, if I am lucky enough to obtain you for my companion." Here I stopped—but I might have gone on a whole hour without interruption—the ladies were drowned in tears; and as for Monsieur de René, never shall I forget him—he sat like one transfixed—he spoke not—his bosom heaved—and he hastily tore open his waistcoat to get room to breathe; his wife ran to him, threw her arms round him, and sobbed aloud:—overcome by this scene, I was hastily quitting the room, but he observed me, and called out "O no, no!" His elder girl had just then given him some water, which so far recovered the poor man, that he advanced towards me, fell on my neck, and burst into tears. "Guardian angel! generous Englishman!" was all he could say. Never did I feel true pleasure till that moment—I led him to a seat. "My dear Sir, be composed—why are you thus agitated? Is it from the pleasing idea that you still have power left to confer an obligation? I will flatter myself it is; and that you intend to oblige me. I shall call again to-morrow, when we will settle every thing; my house is ready for your reception; the expence of your removal must rest on me; honour me by accepting that purse; whatsoever more may be necessary is at your service; and rest assured you will

do me a favour I can never sufficiently acknowledge, by condescending to comply with my wishes." So saying, I left them without their being able to articulate a single word; but such a silence was more expressive than the most elegant flow of language.

I returned home in perfect harmony of spirits, and found your letter. Poor Sir Rowland! I am sorry for his death—as far as I knew of him he appeared highly respectable.

*You are sincerely interested in the happiness of Lady Williams*—Ah, Stanley, beware!—you stand on the brink of a precipice—it requires more than human fortitude to live in the same house with her and preserve your heart. Be not offended at my caution—examine yourself—and if you feel too lively, too tender an interest in the happiness of your friend's wife, (I know your principles) your honour will compel you to fly temptation, as I have done: but if your regard is nothing more than esteem, O, Stanley! watch over the angelic Harriet as would an affectionate brother; shew her mankind in their true colours, and let her not, from the goodness of her own heart, be made the dupe of artifice, and the slave of fashion.

I rejoice that I left London, since there is a probability of her going thither; had I seen her in the arms of Williams, my passions might have  
hurried



hurried me on to madness. I wish, with you, that she could remain in the country, for I sicken at the idea of her being ogled, pointed at, and followed by a croud of knaves, fools, and coxcombs; wretches devoid of sentiment and honour, who would glory in destroying her fair fame, and rendering her miserable for life.

Farewell! I shall accompany Monsieur de René and his family to Amiens; and, by endeavouring to persuade him he is extremely useful to me, I hope I shall lessen his sense of the obligation which he thinks I have conferred upon him; I say *which he thinks*; for, did the poor man know how happy he has made me by allowing me to do him a service, he would then be convinced that I am the person obliged. I shall be absent from Paris about a fortnight; but write nevertheless; for, wherever I am, your letters will reach me.

Say for me, to your sweet hostess, what you please.

BLEVILLE.

MISS ISABELLA MONTAGUE TO LADY  
WILLIAMS.

*Glenmore-hall.*

MY DEAR MADAM,

I INCLOSE a letter which I received last night from my sister, who is married to Sir George Oldham, and they are now in London. You will see that she earnestly supplicates my mother's forgiveness, and I have forcibly urged her request.

Alas! my poor mother is very ill indeed; I fear much worse than she will herself allow; the complaint in her side is returned with great violence; her breath is short, and her nights are restless and uneasy. Dr. Peters, who attends her, thinks my unhappy sister's late conduct has much impaired her health, which, for a long time, has been in a very precarious state:—she desires her most affectionate thanks to you for your kind letter.

You say that you shall probably soon be in town; may I presume to entreat you will admit my sister, if she comes to your house? Can you pardon a rash girl who acted so contrary to the advice and example of her excellent friend? If you condescend to notice her, tell her that my mother will not permit me to write, but does not prohibit

prohibit me from receiving *her* letters; conjure her, therefore, to let me hear often from her; and promise her that my utmost endeavours shall be exerted to obtain for her maternal forgiveness.

May I solicit the favour of your correspondence whilst you are in town? Be assured, no one will be more truly grateful for such an indulgence, nor more strenuously endeavour to deserve it, than my dear Lady Williams's

Affectionate and obliged

ISABELLA MONTAGUE.



SIR GEORGE OLDHAM TO WILLIAM  
HERBERT, ESQ.

*Greta-green.*

**I** SHALL be in town on Thursday next: Will you meet me at Lothian's hotel? The knot is tied, and I am in possession of a charming woman; but cursedly vexed and disappointed for all that. What a blockhead was I not to be more particular in my enquiries! I always understood that Montague left his girls thirty thousand pounds each, payable on the day of marriage; but, as it turns out, the mother's consent is a preliminary article, without which the thirty thousand pounds dwindles into five. This is devilish unlucky, and the discovery had like to have thrown me off my guard; (for madam never acquainted me with it till we were noosed :) however, I gulped down the bitter pill, because a little prudence and dissimulation may yet secure the prize in view: I therefore told my pretty wife it would be necessary, on our arrival in town, for her to write a very penitential letter to her mother, pleading love, and all that, in order to obtain the old woman's forgiveness, which, if she bestows upon us, the fortune follows of course; otherwise I shall demand the five thousand pounds, get the ten thousand left by

an uncle, advanced, and then set off for Italy, or perhaps the antipodes, leaving my lady to make the best of her trip to Scotland. In the mean time my creditors, as they think I am married to a fortune, will be a little patient, and give me opportunities to settle my plan.

I must have a ready-furnished house somewhere, will you get one for me? Adieu, Will!

Believe me sincerely your's,

GEORGE OLDHAM.

LADY WILLIAMS TO MISS ISABELLA  
MONTAGUE.

*Meredith-hall.*

YOUR letter, my dear Isabella, found me under the most painful inquietude: to-morrow is the day which separates me from the best of parents—in vain have I urged him to accompany us; he is resolved never to see London again. I have wept all night—I cannot recover my spirits—the distance is so great—our return so uncertain—and my father is liable to such frequent attacks of the gout—all these circumstances united make me truly miserable. Sir Arthur vainly tries to console me—he has even entreated me to stay—but neither will my father permit it, nor could I bear the idea of giving him that pain which I know his affectionate heart would feel at being divided from his Harriet. I must, I will endeavour to subdue myself—I will trust to that gracious Being who presides over all, for the preservation of my father, and look forward to the day of my return, when my joy will be proportioned to the sorrow which now invades my heart.

Mrs. Owen, who continues in our family, is a worthy sensible woman, and assures me it shall be her study to amuse my excellent parent; had she not



not been here, I think I never could have left him. O, Isabella, how did our infatuated Emma summon courage to quit a mother so good, so respectable, as Mrs. Montague?—Unfeeling girl! I had a letter from her yesterday, written chiefly to entreat my intercessions with her mother. She again condescends to solicit my pardon, and as I think it may be useful both to her and Sir George Oldham for sober people like myself to shew them countenance, I have acquainted her that we have taken a house in Berkeley-square, where I shall be happy to embrace her; so you see, my dear girl, that your wishes were gratified before I knew them.

To correspond with you will be one of my greatest pleasures; for your dutiful attention to your amiable mother, makes me sincerely love and esteem you. Present my most affectionate respects to her; soon, very soon, may she be restored to health! your fears I trust magnify her danger.

Believe me, my dear Isabella,

Your truly affectionate,

HARRIET WILLIAMS.

SIR

SIR EDWARD STANLEY TO THE EARL OF  
BLEVILLE.

*London.*

**I** ARRIVED in town last night with Sir Arthur and Lady Williams, and have taken up my abode at the hotel in Pall-Mall, till I can get a house; for I have sold my brother's, not liking the situation. Sir Arthur earnestly entreated me to be his guest, but I had self-denial enough to decline it.

I was never so affected as by the parting between Lady Williams and her father:—The good old man wept like a child; repeatedly strained his darling to his heart, and implored blessings on her. She was in agonies—she besought him to accompany us. “No, my love, (replied he), I have lived in the country ever since I lost your dear mother, and in the country I have sworn to die. It is necessary you should see the world, that you may know how great is the happiness of a retired life; besides, duty directs you to attend your husband: go then, my child; I have no fears lest you should be perverted by the vices and follies of this abandoned age; for when good principles are once engraven on the mind, no earthly power can erase them. Go, my best beloved; your father resigns  
you

you to the care of that general Parent who will not fail to watch over you, and reward your filial tenderness and obedience." It is impossible to give you an idea of her distress. "My father! my dear father!" was all she uttered—he tore himself from her—Williams and I were softened like babies—we helped the sweet mourner into the coach, and for more than a quarter of an hour not one word was spoken. At length she grew more composed, and giving her hand to Williams, said, "Be not offended with me, my love, for the reluctance with which I quitted my father; a disinclination to accompany you had no share in it." Williams kissed her hand with rapture:—"My Harriet's filial affection and tender sensibility, make her more estimable in my eyes; I only fear lest your health should suffer; be careful of that, for your father's sake and mine, and a few weeks will, I trust, bring us back to Meredith-hall." She smiled through her tears, and endeavoured to be cheerful.

The self-examination you advise is, I hope, needless: I do indeed admire, nay, I love Lady Williams; but it is for her virtues, for her excellencies: no man of honour in her company can feel any sentiment but respect mingled with admiration: were there a chance that she could be infected with the  
follies



follies and vices of the times, my esteem and adoration would have an end ; she would then be no more than a mere mortal ; but while she continues an angel, while every day, every moment of her life, is employed in some act of kindness and benevolence, who can live with, and not adore her ? She has now a fiery trial to go through ;— I wish Sir Arthur had seen more of London, that he might have guarded her against its delusions.

Miss Montague has married Sir George Oldham—a trip to Scotland. I am sorry, because his character is infamous ; but I can neither pardon the lady nor pity her, whatever may be the consequence : every day encreases my surprise at the intimacy which has so long subsisted between her and our charming Harriet ; and now I feel the truth of an observation made by an elegant French writer—“ That we always love our friends better for the virtues we attribute to them, than for those they really possess.”

Let me congratulate you on the pleasing amusement you have procured yourself :—to wipe the tear from sorrow's eye, and restore a despairing family to happiness, is indeed a heart-felt joy ; a joy that will gain strength from recollection. Pursue your benevolent projects ; mix with society ; examine into the different methods by which

which men strive to obtain felicity; and you will soon be convinced that you have chosen the surest way.

I remain, dear Bleville,

Faithfully your's,

EDWARD STANLEY.

LADY

## LADY WILLIAMS TO MISS MONTAGUE.

*Berkeley-square.*

I HAVE been three days in town, my dear Isabella, without having had one moment to devote to you. My aunt, (who took our house for us), I found here ready to receive me. Judge how happy I was to meet a relation so beloved! in embracing her, I forgot the fatigues of my journey, and almost ceased to regret that I had left my father: she spent the evening with us, and next morning Lady Bleville honoured me by a visit, and solicited my intimacy in a manner so friendly, that it gave me the highest pleasure. Yesterday morning, a Lord Richmore, Colonel Sawyer, and Sir Owen Lloyd, called on Sir Arthur; Lady Lloyd and Mrs. Sawyer sent tickets to me in the evening. Sir Edward Stanley, (who spends most of his time here) has been taking great pains to acquaint me with the *étiquette* of visiting in London, and many other little forms and ceremonies. As I by no means wish for a large acquaintance, and have not the smallest relish for a dissipated life, I shall regulate my mode of proceeding by the precepts and example of my aunt and Lady Bleville; better guides I cannot have.

I began last night to grow impatient for news  
of



of your sister ; but I heard nothing till this morning after breakfast, when Lady Oldham was announced. I flew to embrace her, the sooner to take off that bashful humiliation which, from her letters, I supposed she would feel on seeing me—but I was deceived ; she entered with the gayest air imaginable.

“ My dear Lady Williams, I congratulate you on your escape from the odious country.”

“ I also congratulate your Ladyship on your marriage, and recovered spirits ; which from your last letter I supposed much affected on your mother’s account.”

“ O, my dear, so they were at that time ; but you could not think I should continue long in the dismals. *Apropos*, how are my mother and sister ? for I have received no answer to my letters.”

“ You could hardly expect it ; there must be time allowed to abate their anger : but I am sorry to tell you, Lady Oldham, that Mrs. Montague is very ill.”

“ Very ill ! (repeated she, and changed colour) ; I hope, Harriet, you only mean to alarm me.”

“ Indeed I speak the truth. Dr. Peters attends her ; and Isabella is extremely apprehensive for her safety.”

I stop, my dear, to observe that I felt myself much displeased with Lady Oldham’s levity of manner,

manner, or I should not have been so abrupt in my communication.

" I hope, (said she), that Isabella is too apprehensive; my mother was always subject to a complaint in her side, but I never understood it to be dangerous."

" I sincerely wish it may not prove so for your sister's sake: you have given yourself a protector; but Isabella would severely feel the loss of her excellent parent."

" I see I am not restored to your good opinion; you have not forgiven my marrying Sir George Oldham contrary to your advice."

" You are mistaken, Emma; I have no right to be displeased—you owe me no duty."

" Your servant, my dear; but as you condescend a little in calling me Emma, I will now tell you how happy I am in Sir George Oldham; he adores me; and though we came to London only last week, I have already been introduced to Lord and Lady Gayless, Lord and Lady Modish, and several more of the fashionable world: believe me, my dear, you will soon see the difference between this charming town and the dreary Welsh mountains:—Why, Harriet, you will be idolized; followed every where; for even I, who have not half your charms, can already boast of my slaves. Tell me, will you go to the play this evening?"

" You

" You are very obliging, but I am engaged to Lady Bleville."

" To that formal piece of dignity! Lord, child, she might pass well enough in the country; but here, her manners are thought quite *outré*: she is laughed at in every fashionable circle; for I have enquired about her."

" Then I am little ambitious of being known in fashionable circles: I shall be perfectly satisfied with the kind of acquaintance Lady Bleville may introduce me to."

She laughed aloud.

" My stars, Harriet! for Heaven's sake drop your antediluvian notions! Condescend to modernise a little, and think like a being of this world, or you will be the jest of the whole town."

" I am perfectly easy on that score. It is better to endure the jests of others, than incur our own contempt."

" Well, (cried she, rising), since you are so sententious, it is time for me to depart, lest I should catch the infection. I hope to see you in Hertford-street; and I shall often call here without ceremony, and bring Sir George in my hand, if you have no objection."

" None in the world: on the contrary, I shall always rejoice at seeing you together."

She smiled and thanked me. I then mention-



ed your request ; she said she would write to you immediately. I designed asking her many questions respecting her journey to Scotland, but she avoided giving me an opportunity. I will endeavour to obtain as much of her company as I can ; though I fear the gay people, to whom she has been introduced by Sir George Oldham, already rival me in her affections.

I remain, my dear Isabella,

Sincerely your's,

HARRIET WILLIAMS.

P. S. By the carelessness of the servants, this letter was not put in the post yesterday, which I am now glad of, as their omission gives me an opportunity of informing you that I have seen Sir George Oldham : your sister presented him this morning to Sir Arthur and me ; Sir Edward Stanley happened to be present. I do not extremely wonder at Emma's attachment, for Sir George's figure is strikingly fine, and his voice and manner remarkably seducing ; yet I am sure he has (as I was long ago informed) a high opinion of himself, though he evidently tries to conceal it. Both Sir Arthur and I paid him great attention, and expressed our wishes for his intimacy ; he thanked us with the utmost politeness, adding, that nothing would render him so happy as our friendship,

ship, and many more civil things of the same kind.

Emma expressed extreme anxiety about her mother's health, and desired to know how she did the moment I heard.

To morrow I am going into public for the first time, to see the celebrated Mrs. Siddons in *Lady Macbeth*. Lady Lloyd and Mrs. Sawyer, two very pleasing women, are to accompany me, and I hope Lady Bleville and my aunt will join the party.

I long to hear how your dear mother is. O that she would withdraw a certain prohibition, and allow you to transmit to Lady Oldham the happy tidings of a parent's forgiveness!

This is a true woman's postscript. Adieu!

SIR

SIR GEORGE OLDHAM, TO WILLIAM  
HERBERT, ESQ.

*London.*

**T**IS plaguy unlucky, Will, that you should be obliged to quit town just as I returned to it; but I hope the old fellow, your uncle, will quickly take his departure to the land of spirits, and reward you, with his whole fortune, for attending him into Yorkshire. I don't know what business a man turned seventy, can do with an estate of three thousand a year.

We have not yet received any answer from the dowager; if she does not shortly think better of it, I must write in form. I have already been obliged to take up two thousand pounds on my wife's legacy, for she is devilish expensive, and enters with great spirit into every species of dissipation; perhaps, inded, this is my fault, as I have certainly introduced her to a set of acquaintance who would corrupt the best mind existing; and yet, what could I do? I am intimate with no others.

Gayless, Modish, and some more of our fraternity, seem much inclined to admire my choice, and she seems ready enough to encourage them; but I am not tired of her yet, and shall therefore keep a watchful eye.

I have



I have seen the famous Welsh beauty, Lady Williams; she really is an angelic creature; and it would have been wife in Emma had she not introduced me to her. Positively Williams is more enviable than any man living: he has just solicited my intimacy, and I have graciously promised to visit him, that is, his wife, as often as I can. Faith, Herbert, 'twill be a grand achievement to subdue the heart of this Helen; and I don't despair of success. \* \* \* \* \*

Do you know Williams? I fancy not; he is quite a sober, humdrum, domestic husband, and an avowed enemy to dissipation; in which he is encouraged by his grave, sentimental friend, Sir Edward Stanley, who has almost lived with him since he married: my life for it that fellow is a consummate hypocrite; 'tis impossible to be long together in the same house with so charming a woman as Lady Williams, and not try to make advantage of it! but Stanley is a *friend* forsooth! a fig for friendship when a woman's in the case! I would not trust the most sentimental friend in the world with my wife, if she were handsome, and I cared sixpence about her: I shall therefore have an eye to Stanley; and, as to the husband and wife, I must, before them, assume the appearance of a wonderful sober fellow, desirous of cultivating their intimacy, as it will tend to con-

from my reformation; then, on every proper occasion, I shall insinuate to the object of my wishes, that her virtues and excellent principles have totally reformed me; and by paying delicate compliments to the beauties of her mind, and almost wholly passing over those of her person, I shall engage her confidence. What think you of this plan? But I must break off; I am summoned to the play.

\* \* \* \* \*

I was interrupted last night by Modish, who insisted on my going with him to see Macbeth. the house was full when we arrived; however we got into one of the side boxes, and before I had time to seat myself, Modish exclaimed, "Look at that angelic creature in the opposite box! never did I see any thing so handsome!" Turning my head I perceived Lady Williams, with the Lloyds, and some more people. "She is a Welsh beauty," (replied I) just imported."

"A Welsh beauty! upon my soul she outshines every beauty present. Prythee, Oldham, if you know her, introduce me."

"My slight acquaintance will not authorise such a liberty."

"Out upon you for a bashful fellow! but I'll find some method of being known to her." So saying he left me; and, in a short time after, I saw

saw him enter Lady Williams's box with Lord Richmore, who introduced him to her. I could have murdered Modish for his impudence; and being determined that he should not have the *éclat* of flirting all night with the handsomest woman in the house, I made my way into the box next her's, and soon found an opportunity of speaking to her: she treated me with great attention; and I had the pleasure to observe envy in every fellow's face near us at the distinguished preference I obtained. Sir Owen Lloyd, however, claimed the privilege of conducting her to her carriage; they had, I am told, a slight acquaintance in Wales: his wife is what people call a good sort of a woman; that is, she loves her husband, manages her domestic affairs with great prudence, has no violent propensities, and, consequently many negative virtues; I should be sorry, therefore, were she to become an intimate of Lady Williams's; she would make her too sober; but if, by Emma's means, I can draw this inexperienced girl into dissipation, my success is sure.

After the play I went with a party to the Thatched House, where every tongue was lavish in praise of the Welsh beauty. I drank her health in bumpers, and at three in the morning reeled home full of love and wine. Emma was just in bed before me; she is very handsome,



to do her justice, but no more to be compared  
with her friend, than I with Cæsar.

Adieu, Herbert! wish me success, and let me  
hear how you go on in Yorkshire.

**GEORGE OLDHAM.**

## MISS MONTAGUE TO LADY WILLIAMS.

*Glenmork-hall.*

**A**CCEPT, my dearest Madam, our grateful acknowledgements for both your kind letters, which have given us infinite pleasure.

My mother says she never can sufficiently express her obligations to you for your attention to my sister; and she bids me add, that Sir George Oldham's cultivating an intimacy with your Ladyship and Sir Arthur, will be, to her, the strongest proof of the sincerity of his assurances, which she hopes will lead to a reformation of conduct, so necessary to Emma's happiness, and the only way to obtain my mother's forgiveness.

She wrote yesterday to Mr. Pain, and desired him to pay Sir George the 5000l. to which he is entitled, and to enquire into his affairs, that she may know what settlement he can make on his wife, provided my mother should be inclined to give up any thing more.

I am assured that my dear Lady Williams will be pleased with this information; and I wish Sir George may, by his conduct, endeavour to obtain your esteem, and then I am in great hopes my mother will be reconciled.

I begged hard for leave to write to my sister; my mother said it was yet early days, but when she had reason to think that the apparent alteration in Sir George Oldham's behaviour was not merely temporary and calculated to deceive her, and by those means obtain a fortune which he greatly wants, she might indulge me with the permission I requested; but that, at present, *you* must distribute her favours to them in the degree in which you approve their conduct; and she is convinced that the rectitude of your heart would never let you countenance a deceit, even to serve a friend.

Heaven grant, therefore, that my sister, and the man of her choice, may behave in such a way as to deserve your friendship.

Having told you what I know will afford you satisfaction, I am grieved to trouble you with my apprehensions;—but indeed, my dear Madam, I fear that the best of parents is in a decline.

Doctor Peters, yesterday, advised her to go to Bath for two months; “the waters certainly did you good last year.” “Good, my dear doctor, did you say? my health, indeed, was amended, but there I received a fatal stroke to the tranquillity of my mind; it was there my poor ungrateful girl first saw Sir George Oldham, and was captivated by his specious appearance. Shall I expose my Isabella to a similar danger, and, perhaps, die without



without a child to close my eyes and sooth my last moments with filial tenderness?"

I burst into tears: "Your Isabella, my dear mother, never, never will leave you; but if you wish her happiness, comply with Dr. Peters's advice. Bath, and all places are alike to me; and be assured, nothing shall engage my attention, or draw me one moment from your side." "You are very good, my child, and I will consider of it," replied my mother.

Perhaps the journey may give her temporary relief, but I greatly fear she has an inward decay. Should I lose her, what will become of me?

\* \* \* \* \*

I was just now called down and found the doctor with my mother. Well, my good young lady, (says he) make haste and fall to packing; Mrs. Montague and I have determined to set off for Bath in three days time." "Is this true? do you go doctor?" "Why not, (he replied,) have you any objection to an old fellow for an escort? I really am serious; I am fond of Bath; and last night, after I left you, I began to think that a pleasant journey, with agreeable companions, might be of service to me; so here I posted, this morning, to persuade your mother to concur in my whim. I have succeeded; all is settled. Now pray, young lady, don't you be

jealous of the influence I have obtained; if I *should* be honoured with the appellation of father-in-law before we return, I promise to make you an indulgent one." I could have kissed the dear old man for joy. How happy shall we be at Bath, accompanied by this worthy friend, who is perfectly acquainted with all my mother's complaints, and whose cheerful conversation always has power to raise her dejected spirits.

Adieu! dearest Madam; and believe us fully sensible of your friendly attentions. I beg to offer my best thanks for the honour conferred on me by your letters. I will write to you the instant we arrive at Bath.

Pray present my compliments to Sir Arthur, and my kindest remembrances to poor Emma.

I remain,  
Your truly obliged and sincere

ISABELLA MONTAGUE.

SIR

SIR EDWARD STANLEY TO THE EARL OF  
BLEVILLE.

*London.*

**I** AM extremely uneasy, dear Bleville, at not hearing from you: your general punctuality, and the anxiety you must be sensible I feel for your health and spirits, assure me something more than common prevents your writing: if you are well, let me know it immediately.

I accompanied Sir Arthur and Lady Williams, last night, to your mother's; she addressed me the moment I came in—

“ Pray, Sir Edward, have you heard lately from my son? his silence makes me miserable.”

“ Not since I had the honour to acquaint your Ladyship; but I dare say my Lord stays longer at Amiens than he intended, and defers writing till his return.”

“ Heaven grant it may be so! (replied she,) but I have a thousand fears.”

I happened to look at Lady Williams—she was pale as death—I adore her sensibility, though I am sorry she should feel a moment's pain: I wonder not at the strength of your attachment to this most excellent of women; whoever loves her once



must love her always, though the impossibility of an union with her may compel the wounded heart to seek another comforter.

She has been three or four times into public, and is, as you may imagine, generally admired, and much the subject of discourse. Sir George and Lady Oldham are constant visitors in Berkley-square—her ladyship has her share of admiration, with which she seems by no means displeased. That libertine, Lord Gayless, is always at her elbow:—I met them both the other evening at Lady Glanmore's: "Well, Sir Edward, (said she) I am glad you mix a little in the world; I was fearful that your long residence among the goats, and the grave sentimental conversation of your friends at Meredith-hall, had, by this time, inspired you with a design of taking orders: you ever loved to preach, and have, you know, made me yawn very often." "A sufficient reason, surely, to deter me from assuming the gown, for your ladyship's example would be so generally followed, that I could expect nothing better than to be constantly mortified by a sleepy congregation." She laughed.

"For Heaven's sake, (said Gayless) what are you talking of? gowns and congregations! a pretty subject, truly, to entertain a lady with in the midst of the polite world: if you are inclined  
to

to turn father-confessor, repair to some of the abbeyes about Pall-mall."

"Not I, indeed! I never desire to be troubled with any lady's confessions: besides, I am a careless fellow, and ill qualified to keep other people's secrets, because I have none of my own."

"O, to be sure! (replied Lady Oldham, with a sarcastic smile,) you are a vastly good young man, and extremely *well qualified* for the cicis-beo and guardian of your friend's wife. A male Duenna! (exclaimed she, laughing aloud). Pray my Lord, have *you* any inclination to figure in that character?"

"I have an inclination to figure in any character that would recommend me to your Ladyship," answered he, taking her hand with a very tender air.

I turned from them both with contempt.—Lady Oldham will certainly prove a bad woman: but let her jest as she pleases, I despise her too much to mind any thing she says, and am determined *to be the guardian of my friend's wife*. There is something in the behaviour of Sir George Oldham which engages my serious attention; at present, however, I shall confine my suspicions to my own breast.

Adieu! again let me entreat you to write immediately, and quiet the fears of Lady Bleville and

Your affectionate friend,  
EDWARD STANLEY.

LADY



LADY WILLIAMS TO MISS MONTAGUE.

*Berkeley-square*

MY DEAR ISABELLA,

I RECEIVED the three lines you sent to acquaint me with your address at Bath, and am happy to find Mrs. Montague bore her journey so well; Heaven grant that she may derive benefit from it!

I have just heard from my dear father; he continues in perfect health, and kindly writes to me by every other post; Mrs. Owen, he says, is all attention both to him and my little *protégée*, Fanny, who is left under her care during my absence.

I begin to lead a very dissipated life; Sir Arthur's excessive fondness will spoil me; he is always contriving new scenes of pleasure, and hurries me about continually; indeed, sometimes, more than is agreeable; but I know his motive, and should hate myself did I not feel grateful: yet I wish our law-business was finished, that we might return again to my beloved parent.

I see Sir George Oldham and your sister daily, but not always together, for that would be unfashionable. I am obliged to turn a deaf ear to the continual sarcasms and witty remarks which  
are

are made on me for appearing so constantly with Sir Arthur. Emma told me, yesterday, I was the ridicule of every assembly in town, and so prudish, that nobody would take me for a woman of fashion.

“ My aunt and Lady Bleville, (replied I) express themselves satisfied with my behaviour; I am likewise happy enough to obtain my husband's approbation; what signifies it, then, whether I please those trifling insignificant people, who are eternally running from house to house, merely to kill time, and divert themselves at the expence of others?”

“ Well, Harriet, I see you are incorrigible; but the ladies have no cause to complain; for if you chose to exert the powers which nature has given you, half the female world would expire with envy.”

To change the conversation, I mentioned your arrival at Bath, adding, that your mother was tolerable, which seemed to give her pleasure. Pray assure Mrs. Montague, that every indulgence she thinks proper to grant Lady Oldham, I shall consider as an obligation to myself; for I trust her heart is still good, though too much volatility, and a strong prepossession in favour of an object really seducing, prompted her, at an evil hour, to forget her duty. I am sure she pants for a reconciliation

conciliation with those so deservedly dear to her—and  
happy should I be to announce her pardon.

Write soon. I remain, my dear Isabella,  
Your affectionate

HARRIET WILLIAMS.

I DOUBT not, dear Isabella, but my long  
absence has given you some inquietude. A  
the accident which I met with soon after writing  
last to you, disabled me from holding a pen; and  
I did not like to employ an amanuensis, lest my  
mother's tenderness, and your friendly solici-  
tudes, should lead you both to imagine the thing of more  
importance than it really was.

I told you, in my last letter, that I designed  
accompanying Mr. Norton to Rome; and in January,  
to America. The manner of the journey, I  
mentioned, we all set off together; and when I  
put them into possession of the little party,  
their gratitude, their transport, I shall not per-  
haps need to describe.

O, Stanley! ought I to register in the ship-  
board, in which to my satisfaction, I was  
as to effect me to have enjoyed, when that day  
disappeared, it has been the means of my return-  
ing, and I have to thank people, that this  
circumstance shall soon be from the necessity  
in which I have too long languished. I am now  
convinced there are a thousand ways of procuring  
conclusion

THE



THE EARL OF BLEVILLE TO SIR EDWARD  
STANLEY.

*Paris.*

**I** DOUBT not, dear Stanley, but my long silence has given you some inquietude. A little accident which I met with soon after writing last to you, disabled me from holding a pen; and I did not like to employ an amanuensis, lest my mother's tenderness, and your friendly solicitude, should lead you both to imagine the thing of more consequence than it really was.

I told you, in my last letter, that I designed accompanying Monsieur de René, and his family, to Amiens. The morning after the interview, I mentioned, we all set off together; and when I put them into possession of their little paradise, their gratitude, their transport, I shall not pretend to describe.

O, Stanley! ought I to repine at the disappointment which so deeply affected my tranquillity as to oblige me to leave England, when that very disappointment has been the means of my rendering essential service to worthy people? No: this circumstance shall rouse me from the melancholy in which I have too long indulged. I am now convinced there are a thousand ways of procuring  
content

content to ourselves, by diffusing happiness around us. Yes, Stanley, in the felicity of others I will find my own.

I spent a most agreeable fortnight at Amiens, and then returned hither in much better health and spirits than when I went away. I found your letter at my lodging, and intended to send an answer by return of post; but, just as I was sitting down to write, the Count de Beauville called, and insisted on my accompanying him to the opera. I went; and we seated ourselves behind two very handsome women. I enquired their names, and my companion told me the elder was the Countess de Sansclerre, the younger Madame d'Hautville, her sister. Knowing the Count, they immediately entered into conversation with us, and, after the opera, politely asked us to supper; 'twas in vain to deny, they would be obeyed, and we got into their carriage. The coachman drove most furiously; and, turning too short round a corner, overset the coach: luckily I was the only person materially hurt—I received a blow on my head which deprived me of sense, and my right arm, by being bent under me, was broke just above the wrist. When I recovered my senses, I found myself on a bed, surrounded by the Countess, her sister, the Count de Beauville, and two or three surgeons:—they told me the blow on my head

head was of no consequence, but that my arm must be set directly. I enquired whether I could not first be conveyed home? " By no means, (cried the Countess) your servant is already sent for; and you must content yourself with remaining here till you are perfectly recovered." The ladies then quitted the room, and the surgeons performed their operation; 'twas a painful one, insomuch that I fainted: during the night I grew feverish and delirious, but next day found myself considerably better, and in a week I got pretty well, tho' not able to use a pen.

I must ever remain deeply grateful for the humane attentions I received from my kind hostess, the Countess de Sansclerre, and likewise from her amiable sister. The former is a young widow, the latter wife to an old man of seventy, who labours under a complication of disorders; she had his leave to pass a month at Paris with the Countess, who has been ill; a fortnight of her furrow is elapsed, and she appears very melancholy, perhaps at the idea of returning into the country. She is handsomer than her sister, and has an air of sensibility not common here. To-morrow I go back to my lodging, for the Countess would not suffer me to leave her house till I had recovered the use of my arm.

I sincerely rejoice, my friend, that your regard  
for



for the most lovely of women is such as will bear inspection, and justify you to your own heart. What would I give could I subdue my feelings sufficiently to return home and enjoy her society! but, at present, I dare not trust myself.

Adieu! I must write to my mother—to that dear and respectable parent, whose happiness depends on the welfare of her son.

Believe me, truly, your's,

BLEVILLE.

P.S. I am not much surpris'd at Miss Montague's imprudence, though I am sorry for it: she always appeared to me extremely thoughtless, and a great flirt. I join with you in wondering at the friendship which has so long subsisted between her and Lady Williams, for never were two persons more different.

SIR

SIR GEORGE OLDHAM TO WILLIAM  
HERBERT, ESQ.

*London.*

**T**EN thousand curses fall on the wretch who first invented dice! and treble ten thousand on my foolish head, which has suffered me to become the dupe of designing knaves who have ruined me for ever! Yes, Herbert, I am completely undone, and must now quit England, and relinquish all my glorious designs on the charming Lady Williams.

Yesterday morning I had a visit from Mr. Pain, a barrister, who came at the request of Mrs. Montague, to pay me the five thousand pounds she has no right to with-hold. He said he was commissioned by that lady to enquire into the state of my rental, and to ask what settlement I intended making on my wife, as in less than three months she would be entitled to a legacy of ten thousand pounds from her uncle, exclusive of what Mrs. Montague might be inclined to do, provided our conduct pleased her. I told him plainly my estate was so burthened with annuities, that unless I had forty thousand pounds to pay them off, I could make no settlement. "How so? (replied he). You may at least employ the ten thousand

thousand in redeeming some part of your estate, and settle that on Lady Oldham." I told him — but what the devil signifies repeating all this stuff?—to get rid of the fellow, I said I would act in conjunction with him; and he went away tolerably satisfied. I then generously made Emma a present of five hundred pounds out of the five thousand; and with the rest in my pocket, (fool, blockhead that I was!—) I called in the evening at Brookes's, where I found the old set, and where I not only lost every shilling about me, but being desperate, I played and betted till I was four thousand pounds in debt. Judge of my distraction!—I returned home at five this morning, in a fit of gloomy despair, and felt half inclined to blow my brains out—I cast a retrospect on my affairs—two thousand pounds I had already taken up on Emma's legacy, and four thousand more were now gone—what then could I say to the cursed barrister? or how was I to expect another shilling from Mrs. Montague;—in short, I found it was all over, and that instead of retrieving matters by matrimony, I had the incumbrance of a wife added to my former embarrassments;—therefore the only thing that remains for me is to quit England, and leave her to her mother. I have been with the person who accommodated me before, and resigned over to him the whole of

Emma's



Emma's legacy : he has advanced the remaining eight thousand pounds on receiving his usual premium : with part of this sum I have discharged my cursed debts of last night, and the rest remains in my pocket. To-morrow I set off for France, from whence I shall probably proceed to Italy. Mrs. Montague no doubt will take care of my wife, and our violent passion is, I believe on both sides, pretty well subsided. Herbert, adieu! — What a confounded piece of work have I made of my matrimonial expedition !

GEORGE OLDHAM.

MISS

## MISS MONTAGUE TO LADY WILLIAMS.

*Bath.*

**A** THOUSAND thanks for your last letter; I indeed wanted such a cordial, for I am apprehensive all my fears will be realised; my dear mother certainly gets worse; she is herself sensible of it, and hourly endeavours to reconcile me to the most awful of all events. I this morning questioned Doctor Peters, and conjured him not to deceive me.

“ My dear young lady, (says the good old man), I am sorry to inform you that I fear the disorder will prove fatal, though not immediately; Mrs. Montague may live some months, but I cannot flatter you by saying that I think she ever again will be restored to health.”

Judge, my dear Madam, how unhappy I am! but I endeavour to appear cheerful, that I may not affect my mother's spirits. As I go no where but with her, I cannot give you an account of the amusements of this gay city.

An officer's widow lodges on our second floor; she is here with her little girl, who appears in a consumptive state. Doctor Peters, (from hu-

made

mane motives I believe), has formed an acquaintance with them, and prescribes for the child.

He thinks the lady's circumstances narrow, and mentioned her yesterday with so much esteem and compassion, as induced my mother to invite her to dine with us to-morrow. I wish she may prove an agreeable addition to our little circle; she does not seem more than six or seven and twenty.

Your account of my sister makes me uneasy. Emma always had an uncommon flow of spirits, and the gay world, into which she has entered, will occasion her utmost exertion of them. Her whole future happiness must depend on the choice of her companions; for although she possesses a great share of sense, yet her love of pleasure, admiration, and the fashionable societies, so different from her former connections, may lead her into many scrapes, if she is not kept right by good examples.—My mother, therefore, intreats you to cultivate an intimacy with her, and if possible draw her into the company you approve.

We expect daily to hear from Mr. Pain, and we shall then know the situation of Sir George's affairs. Emma's last letter pleased my mother very much, and I sincerely hope the



time is not far distant when I shall embrace my dear sister, and see her restored to a parent's affection. My good mother unites in kind respects to yourself and Sir Arthur, with, dear Madam,

Your obliged and faithful,

ISABELLA MONTAGUE.

## LADY WILLIAMS TO MISS MONTAGUE.

*Berkeley-square.*

MY DEAR ISABELLA,

I SEND this under cover to Doctor Peters, who will I hope prepare you for the distressing intelligence I have to communicate. It is a painful task to wound the heart of a friend; yet you had better hear from me, than from strangers, what must soon become public. Know then, that Sir George Oldham has deserted his wife, and is gone to the continent.

Yesterday, soon after dinner, as Sir Edward Stanley, my husband, and I, were sitting round the table, we heard, with surprise, a loud knock at the door—for it was a very unusual visiting hour: being engaged early in the evening, I rung the bell intending to deny myself; but before I could speak to the footman, in rushed your sister—her looks wild—her dress disordered—she sunk down upon a chair, and burst into tears—I flew to her terrified to death.

“For Heaven’s sake, dear Emma, what has happened?”

“O, Lady Williams, I am deserted, beggar-ed!—Yes, the cruel monster has carried off all, and left me to poverty and shame.”

“My

" My dear Lady Oldham, what is it you mean ?"

" Call me not Oldham, (said she, rising and stamping wildly), I hate, I abjure the name!—that villain, Sir George, it is he who has struck a dagger through my heart, and exposed me to contempt and derision:" then giving me a letter, " read that, cried she, and tell me what is to become of the wretched Emma." I enclose you a copy of the diabolical scroll: after reading it, I embraced her, and intreated that she would be comforted.

" You have one friend, dear Emma, who will never desert you—this house is your's till Mrs. Montague fixes on some plan to make you happy——"

" What!—do you think I will *now* solicit my mother's protection? *now*, when the conduct of Sir George has so fully justified her, and condemned me—no, sooner than that, I would submit to any evil."

" When passion subsides, you will think more properly, dear Emma, and in the mean time I am sure Sir Arthur will authorise me to say, that my purse, and all I have, is at your disposal—look on me as a sister, and on him as a brother, who will do every thing to extricate you from your difficulties."



“ You are the best of women and of friends —come to me to-morrow morning, and guide me by your counsels. I will now return home ; I must not desert my house. As to money, at present I want none, having five hundred pounds in my possession ; but I gratefully acknowledge all your kindness.”

With much persuasion I got her to stay the evening with me, while Sir Arthur went to make my apologies at the party to which I was engaged. I tried to comfort her ; but the idea of being talked of, and compelled to relinquish the station she has lately figured in, afflicts her beyond measure. Whether violent attachments are not lasting, or whether the treatment she has received from Sir George may have quite extinguished her love, I know not, but certain it is, that her pride seems to suffer more than her heart, on this occasion. Dear unfortunate girl!—however, she has a parent left who will, I doubt not, be as ready as she is able to console her.

You will, I am certain, communicate this intelligence as gently as possible to Mrs. Montague. I shall wait impatiently for her directions.

Believe me, your's sincerely,

HARRIET WILLIAMS.

SIR

SIR GEORGE OLDHAM TO LADY OLDHAM.

*(Enclosed in the preceding.)*

A UNION, formed under mutual deception, could have no stability. When I addressed Miss Montague, I was led to believe she had forty thousand pounds down; a sum which would have retrieved my affairs, and perhaps prevented the separation which must now take place. You, Madam, never informed me before our marriage, that your mother had power to withhold so large a part of your fortune; therefore, to her I leave you.

Your uncle's legacy I have received an equivalent for; and your own five thousand pounds are gone. My creditors will soon hear of my departure, and enter the house—therefore admit nobody till you have secured your valuables.—It is a cursed affair—but you have no reason to complain—you have still a mother to support you—while I am driven to a foreign land.—Make the best use of your misfortunes, and avoid dissipation and gambling, which have been my ruin:—but this is too much like a dying speech—therefore, adieu! and be assured I wish you happy—return to your mother, and you have a chance of being so.

GEORGE OLDHAM.

K 3

LADY

## LADY WILLIAMS TO MISS MONTAGUE.

*Berkeley-square.*

I AM just come back from Lady Oldham's—I went to her this morning at twelve, and was rather surpris'd at finding Lord Gayless there before me; he had heard of her misfortune, for “ill-news flies on eagle’s wings,” and waited on her immediately with an offer of his house. She rose to receive me with an air so different from what I expected, indeed with such an evident serenity, that I could not help betraying my astonishment.

“I am, (said she), a different creature from what I was last night—reflection has convinced me that I have little cause to regret the step Sir George has taken; for in all probability, if my whole fortune had been thrown into his power, he would have spent it; therefore, I should have purchased a short respite from disgrace with the deprivation of every thing.”

“Talk not of disgrace, my dear Lady Oldham, (said Lord Gayle’s), the vile actions of an abandoned husband cannot cast a shade on you, who were designed to be the ornament of society; my wife entreats you to reside with her this winter, and do not refuse, I conjure you!”

“I believe



"I believe, my Lord, my offer was made previous to your Lordship's; and my long friendship for Lady Oldham authorises me to think I am entitled to a preference, particularly as Lady Gayless is not here to enforce your Lordship's invitation."

"My dear Madam, Lady Gayless is confined by a severe cold, and therefore deputed me."

"I am infinitely obliged to you, my dear friends, (interrupted Emma), but for the present, at least, I must decline both invitations. My house and furniture are hired by the month; Sir George's creditors have nothing to do with them; I shall therefore continue here till the month I have now entered upon is expired, and during the interim I may learn my mother's pleasure, and fix my future plan."

"But would it not, my dear Emma, be far more eligible to favour me with your company? Will you refuse your friend the happiness of soothing your sorrows?"

"You are very good, my dear Lady Williams, but I have made up my mind, and shall continue here. If my mother condescends to relent, and invest me with the fortune my father meant I should possess, it is well—but I never will return into the country, and endure continual sarcasms

and ill-humoured observations from vulgar wretches who know nothing of the world."

" I am sorry if such is your determination. Mrs. Montague, I am fully convinced, will do every thing to promote your future happiness."

" Well, (interrupted she), now is the trial. I am dependant on her; I have disoblged her, and been cruelly deceived myself—but I will never *solicit* favours even from my mother, be the consequence what it may :—they shall come spontaneously if they come at all."

Forgive your daughter, amiable Mrs. Montague! and reflect that adversity, strange as it may appear, is ever prone to encrease our pride.

Sir Arthur came in, and earnestly entreated Emma to accept my invitation; but she still continued obdurate, and did not even deign to consult him or me respecting any of her affairs. What has happened since last night to occasion so great a change in her behaviour, I am at a loss to imagine. Lord Gayles seemed resolved to outstay us, and we therefore took leave.

I really think, my dear girl, that your mother's indulgence towards Emma was never more necessary than at this period:—a consciousness of deserving the reproaches of her friends, makes her unwilling to solicit a reconciliation; but  
I am

I am sure she would be highly obliged by voluntary kindness on their part; and I think the natural generosity of her disposition would so far operate as to produce a grateful return. Believe me,

Ever your's,

HARRIET WILLIAMS.



MRS. MONTAGUE TO LADY WILLIAMS.

*Bath.*

MY DEAREST MADAM,

**W**EAK and feeble as I am, I cannot be contented with acknowledging your kindness by another hand, though that hand is my dear Isabella's.

Oh, Lady Williams! could you have thought that my Emma, that your friend, would ever have taken so rash, so disgraceful a step?—Unhappy girl! her folly has been her punishment; and she now finds, by sad experience, how vain is the attempt to subdue bad habits, and reclaim a libertine. My heart bleeds for her! she is still my child, my much-loved Emma. How can I ever sufficiently thank you for all your kindness to my poor deluded girl? continue, dear Madam, to assist her with your advice; and assure her, in my name, that if she will return and reside with me, all shall be forgotten—never will we cast the least retrospection on what has befallen her: neither shall she hear the slightest censure on her past conduct. She shall again be my dearest Emma, and join her beloved sister in those acts of grateful duty which sooth and prepare my mind for the  
blessed

bleſſed manſions to which, I truſt, I am daily haſtening. That God may reward you, both here and hereafter, for all your virtues, is the fervent prayer of,

Dear Madam;

Your truly obliged and affectionate,

EMMA MONTAGUE.

## MISS MONTAGUE IN CONTINUATION.

**M**Y mother insisted on writing the above few lines herself. Alas, my dear Lady Williams, what a shock has she received! yet it was no more than she expected; for she had been too well informed of Sir George Oldham's abandoned principles. Now that the first emotions of her grief are in some measure subsided, she endeavours to console herself. "Had that vile man (said she) continued to live with my daughter, who knows how far bad example and pernicious precepts might have perverted her understanding, and taught her to call evil, good, and good, evil! The veil which blinded her judgment is now drawn aside, and she will again be my daughter." Such is the language of this dear parent, whose disorder hourly gains ground, and fills me with the most terrifying apprehensions.

By my mother's desire I have written to Emma, requesting her to come immediately to Bath, where she will be received with open arms.

\* \* \* \* \*

Your second favour, my dear Madam, is this instant delivered to me. I am shocked beyond expression: What could the thoughtless Emma mean by refusing your protection, and desiring no application



application might be made to my mother? I hope and trust that the letter she will receive from me, strengthened by your good advice, may induce her to alter her mind, and bring her immediately to Bath. I am convinced I need say no more to persuade you to use all your influence with her for this purpose. Till I hear again from London, I shall not communicate your last letter to my mother, as it would only inflict pain and sorrow on a constitution already too much shattered.

That the next intelligence may be more satisfactory, prays

Your afflicted,

ISABELLA MONTAGUE.

THE EARL OF BLEVILLE TO SIR EDWARD  
STANLEY..

*Paris.*

I HAVE just received your second letter, and gratefully feel the kindness of your apprehensions on my account. I hope both you and my dear mother are by this time acquainted with the cause of my silence.

O Stanley, and did the charming Harriet turn pale when fears were expressed for my safety? Never again may I be the cause of giving her one moment's uneasiness! You say she is generally admired; for her personal beauties I suppose—but if the admiration of mankind stops there, they know her not—had she been only a beautiful woman, I had never quitted England.

Since I wrote to you last, I have been continually engaged with the lively Countess of Sanfclerre and her amiable sister—I have frequented public diversions, and joined in every thing gay and dissipated, but I frequently return from these amusements disgusted and out of spirits. I believe I shall go again to my worthy steward at Amiens, from whom I received this morning a most affectionate letter. Interrupted——

The

The Countess is at my door in her carriage, and insists on my accompanying her in an airing.

\* \* \* \* \*

I had not time to finish my letter yesterday. I got into the Countess's carriage—she was alone. “Are you not a strange being, (cried she), to oblige me to call for you in a morning? You never attend my toilet—are you afraid of trusting yourself with me?”

“I have so many obligations to your goodness, Madam, that I am fearful of being troublesome and presumptuous.”

She fixed her expressive eyes upon me. “In truth, my good friend, that is a shallow excuse: but tell me, and tell me truly—have you no engagement, no affair of the heart, which at present engrosses your attention?”

“None, upon my honour. You and your sister are the only Ladies I visit.”

“Well then, my Lord, remember my doors are always open to you—my sister is soon going into the country, and I shall want a companion for my retired hours—I have fools and coxcombs enough for my public ones.”

Here was an attack, Stanley—I never felt myself more at a loss for an answer: the lady no doubt expected raptures, and I did kiss her hand, and  
muttered



muttered something about happiness, goodness, and I know not what—she seemed pleased, for she conversed with great life and spirit during the rest of our airing, and insisted on taking me home to dine with her. At the dinner-hour her sister joined us, saying, with a faint smile, “ she hoped our drive had been agreeable.”

“ O, very agreeable; (replied the Countess.) I flatter myself I shall cure our melancholy Englishman of his grave looks, and teach him to reserve them for his own foggy island.”

“ There is no resisting your powers, Madam; you can make me what you please.”

“ There, sister! (cried she) have not I done wonders?—The creature is really capable of saying a civil thing.”

“ Lord Bleville must always be agreeable, let him say what he will;” answered Madame d’Hautville, with a sigh which surprised me.

Just then the Count de Beauville was announced; he dined with us, and we afterwards went all together to the opera—I have invited him to dine with me to-day; I wish to be particularly informed about these ladies; if the Countess is, as I apprehend, a woman of gallantry, I shall quit Paris, for I do not feel the smallest inclination to be engaged in an intrigue.

You

You have raised my curiosity by your suspicions respecting Sir George Oldham—do not fail to satisfy it in your next.

The Count is come. Adieu!

BLEVILLE.

LADY

## LADY WILLIAMS TO MISS MONTAGUE.

*Berkeley-square.*

THE moment I received your letter, I hurried to Lady Oldham; she had just got that you wrote to her—it lay open on the table.

“ My dear Emma, (said I), how sincerely do I rejoice at this long wished for reconciliation! in the arms of your respectable mother you will bury every grief.”

“ Had my mother (replied she) thought fit to approve Sir George Oldham’s addresses; had she given up my fortune, and secured me a proper settlement, he might have retrieved his affairs; and I should not then have been thus publicly disgraced, and subjected to the malicious remarks of every tea-table in town.”

“ Your sentiments are much changed since last we talked on this subject: then, you rejoiced that Sir George Oldham had *not* been entrusted with your whole fortune. But let us dwell no longer on unpleasant themes—Mrs. Montague and your sister are prepared to receive you with tenderness and joy; not one disagreeable reflection will be made.”

‘ How! (cried she, interrupting me) can I go to Bath, and either turn recluse, or encounter the sneers.



sneers of every person I meet with? nay, return perhaps to the odious country, and my former state of dependance."

"My dear Emma, be not petulant: if you cannot yet summon courage to go to Bath, let me be favoured with your company while I remain in town; when I return to Meredith-hall I will take Bath in my way, and restore you to your mother's protection."

She seemed affected, and for a moment remained silent; but quickly recovering herself, she replied:—

"No, Lady Williams; I cannot accept your kind offer—I cannot stay in England—my resolution is fixed—I am determined to go abroad."

"Abroad!—for Heaven's sake with whom?"

"With Lord and Lady Gayles;," answered she, colouring.

"O, Emma, is this your friendship! and has Lord Gayles, the acquaintance of a day, has *he* more influence over your mind than the friend of your infancy; the friend who has ever loved you with a sister's affection? Can you separate yourself for ever from a parent whose growing infirmities and declining health may, in a few months, bring her to the grave? Besides, ought not the character of your new friends to be investigated before

before you wholly resign yourself to their protection?"

"I have nothing to apprehend on that score, (replied she): my plan is fixed, and cannot be altered. If my mother chooses to send me any pecuniary assistance, I shall be thankful; if not, I have about five hundred pounds, and must trust to chance for a supply when that is gone."

"What madness, dear Emma, possesses you? Let me entreat——"

"Hold! (interrupted she) I will hear no more. I love and respect you beyond any woman in the world—I have disgraced your friendship, and cannot bear your presence."

Saying this, she flew into another room and locked the door.

Heavily afflicted, I got into my carriage, and drove to Lady Bleville's; both my aunt and she were at home. I acquainted them with what had just passed, and enquired into the characters of Lord and Lady Gayless; she, I find has rather a doubtful reputation; and he is a notorious libertine. I begged my aunt to inform Emma of this; she instantly drove to her door, but was refused admittance: I then went home and determined to send her a letter; I did so, but what effect it may have Heaven only knows!

I shall

I shall put this in the post immediately, that Mrs. Montague may take what steps she thinks proper.

Believe me, Isabella, I more than share your grief on the present occasion—tax my friendship to the utmost if I can be useful to you; and rest assured that I am,

Your sincerely devoted,

HARRIET WILLIAMS.

Miss



## MISS MONTAGUE TO LADY WILLIAMS.

*Barb.*

MY DEAR MADAM,

**Y**OUR letter, and one just received from my infatuated sister, have almost broken our hearts. As I knew their contents could not be long concealed from my mother, I desired Dr. Peters to take upon himself the disagreeable task of communicating to her the unpleasant intelligence. To your feeling and tender heart I am sure it is needless to describe my poor mother's emotions! She entreated the Doctor to write, in her name, conjuring Emma, in the most affectionate terms, either to return to us, or to accept of your friendly protection: we likewise enclosed a deed wherein my mother settles 600*l.* per annum on my sister, not subject to the controul of Sir George.

Our worthy friend also, from himself, used every possible argument to induce Emma to comply with our joint wishes: Heaven grant that his kind endeavours may be effective!

O, my dear Lady Williams, how soon is a good mind corrupted by bad examples! A false shame is, I hope, the only cause which prevents my sister's coming to Bath; in that case the Doctor's

tor's letter must surely have weight with her, supposing her heart not quite callous to every tender feeling, and not entirely devoid of the impressions of filial duty.

My mother has had two fainting fits to day, which have left her very weak; her troubles are too great for her strength; and I fear my spirits would be quite overcome, were it not for the kind attention of Mrs. Arnold, the lady whom I mentioned in a former letter; she has herself been tried in the school of adversity, and is therefore the proper person to console and comfort us. May your next favour inform us that the dear Emma is hastening to the arms of an affectionate mother and sister!

With every sentiment of respect and esteem, I remain,

My dear Lady Williams,

Your obliged friend

ISABELLA MONTAGUE.

LADY

## LADY OLDHAM TO LADY WILLIAMS.

*(Enclosed in the following letter.)**Hertford street.*

**U**NWORTHY and ungrateful as I must appear in your eyes, I cannot leave England without opening my heart, and shewing you, alas! how undeserving I am of the friendship with which you have honoured me. Yes, I am sensible of the many wrong steps I have taken; but they are not to be retrieved. I am the proudest, the most ambitious of human beings—I pant for superiority over all the world—can I then bear the reproachful glances of my mother, the pitying looks of my sister and my friends, and the scornful sneers of the unfeeling many? Besides, can I, who must henceforth fly from myself, submit to be buried in the country? No: I ever loved dissipation, and dissipation now is necessary to my peace.

I have received a letter from Dr. Peters—but when your influence has failed, how could he expect success?—If my presence had power to restore my mother's health, I would go to Bath this moment; but my sister is much more likely to alleviate her sufferings than the ungrateful Emma who forsook her. The income she has settled on  
me



me I accept with thankfulness; but that would not support me in any style here. I have, therefore, no alternative. Lord and Lady Gayless are persons of rank, spirit, and vivacity; with them I shall enjoy the splendour and the amusements in which I delight; and abroad I shall receive that admiration and respect, without which I cannot be happy.

Had my choice fallen on a better man—but retrospections are vain—I will therefore hasten to conclude.

Farewell, my dearest Lady Williams! you possess my sincerest esteem; and though I never had resolution to tread in your paths, yet I allow they are the paths which lead to peace.

Once more, farewell!—Sometimes think of a friend who never can forget you.

EMMA OLDHAM.

## LADY WILLIAMS TO MISS MONTAGUE.

*Berkeley-square.*

**E**NCLOSED, my dear Isabella, is a letter which I received this morning from Lady Oldham. The moment I had read it I threw myself into my carriage and drove to her house. Lord Gayless's coach was at the door, and the servants were busied in putting in bandboxes. I alighted, and, without asking a single question, made my way to her dressing-room; I found her in a travelling dress, sitting before the glass and pinning her hat, while Lord Gayless stood by with her muff in his hand. The instant she perceived me, she screamed violently and fell back in her chair. I sprung towards her—tears stopped my utterance.

O, Lady Williams, (cried she) how cruel you are!—Why would you give me this unnecessary shock?"

I threw myself on my knees—"Emma, dear Emma, forego your design; consent to return home with me, and all your wishes shall be gratified. Is my influence quite gone? What have I done to forfeit your friendship?"

"Nothing

“ Nothing, nothing! (answered she, bursting into tears) but leave me, Lady Williams; I am unworthy of your esteem; 'tis now too late to recall the past; and the persuasions of the whole world could not alter my resolution.”

“ If you are, indeed, determined—if neither my prayers and tears, nor the earnest request of a dying parent, who longs to fold you in her arms—if neither can avail, I *will* leave you; but O, remember, you have planted a thorn in the heart that would have bled to do you service.”

She sobbed aloud—then, starting up, exclaimed, “ Best and dearest of women, farewell!” and rushed out of the room.

His Lordship who, during this scene, had stood hanging down his head and twirling the muff, now hastily bowed to me, and followed her; and the next moment I heard a carriage drive from the door. Finding she was gone I went home, and, for more than an hour, could not compose my spirits sufficiently even to write to you.

There is a *partie-carrée* formed—Colonel Storville makes the fourth, and I hear he is very partial to Lady Gayless. Whether Emma designs writing to me, or not, I am ignorant.



Let me hear from you soon, my dear girl, and keep up your own spirits, that you may be enabled to comfort your declining parent. Believe me

Affectionately your's,

HARRIET WILLIAMS.

SIR

SIR EDWARD STANLEY TO THE EARL OF  
BLEVILLE.

*London.*

**Y**OUR last letter, my dear Bleville, gave me infinite satisfaction. I congratulate you on the society you at present enjoy; and I hope the lively Countess will soon restore your spirits and wonted vivacity: she has my sincerest wishes for success. And so, my grave friend, if she is a woman of gallantry you will run away from her—For what, pray? Do you doubt your own resolution? If so, depend upon it the outworks of the garrison are given up already, and she has you fast—for a little *badinage* I mean. Such amours have nothing to do with the heart. I want to know more of her sister.

As you see our English newspapers, you must be informed of Sir George Oldham's late proceedings. His lady, willing to follow a good example, is likewise gone off to the continent; not by way of joining her husband, but to accompany Lord and Lady Gayles. For our sweet Harriet's sake I am concerned, as she still loves her unworthy friend, who must now, I fear, fall a sacrifice to the artifices of Gayles. I have long seen his partiality for her; and I am told there is

no argument he has not used, no lie he has not fabricated, in order to get her out of England.

Lord Richmore has, of late, been a constant attendant on Lady Williams; he is a man of gallantry, though not a professed libertine, and I do not like his behaviour to her; it is insinuating and attentive to the last degree; and though the ardour of his expressions frequently distresses her, yet there is a delicacy in them which precludes rebuke. He was Williams's school-fellow; and from what cause I know not, seems rising fast above me in his regard. I am now treated by Williams with more civility than friendship; and, as I sincerely esteem him, this change in his conduct hurts me much.

Yesterday morning I called in Berkeley-square; Lady Williams was putting on her cloak; Sir Arthur and Lord Richmore were with her.

"O, Sir Edward, (said she) your visit is quite *à-propos*—these gentlemen have persuaded me to accompany them to an auction, and you must go with us."

"Sir Edward Stanley's company (replied Lord Richmore) will, no doubt, be a very agreeable addition to our party, and, I hope, remove all your Ladyship's objections to going."

This was spoken with a mighty significant air; of which I took no notice, but carelessly answered

on

that



that I was quite at their service. As Williams had not uttered a word from the time I came in, I gave him a rap on the shoulder, saying, "Prythee why so grave, my friend?"

"Not grave, Sir Edward, I am only waiting patiently till Lady Williams is at leisure to favour us with her company."

"My dear Sir Arthur, (returned she in a tone of surprize) I am quite ready to attend you—I beg your pardon if I have made you wait." So saying she led the way out of the drawing-room. I motioned for Lord Richmore to follow her.

"By no means, Sir Edward; pray hand her Ladyship to the carriage."

I was provoked at his manner, but offered my hand, which she accepted. Very little was said in the coach:—Williams looked gloomy, which she seemed to observe with concern and astonishment. I felt embarrassed; but Richmore was uncommonly gay, and had, indeed, almost all the talk to himself. In the auction-room we were joined by Lady Bell Reville, and a Mrs. Burnett; the former a woman of the *ton*, who dresses gaily, talks well, flirts with every pretty fellow, receives visits at her toilet, plays deep, and is, in the bad sense of the word, a complete fine lady; the latter a dissipated young widow of fortune; and both were lately introduced to Lady Williams by Richmore

more. When our party left the auction-room, I bowed to the ladies, shook Williams by the hand, and wished them all a good morning. Williams said not one word to detain me; and on Richmore's countenance I saw a malicious smile, for which I could have caned him. Being much disturbed at Williams's unaccountable behaviour, I called this morning in Berkeley-square, hoping to come to an explanation; but he was gone out of town with Lord Richmore. However, the moment he returns, I will, if possible, see him.

Adieu, dear Bleville! and believe me

Ever your's,

EDWARD STANLEY.

Miss

## MISS MONTAGUE TO LADY WILLIAMS.

*Bath.*

MY DEAR MADAM,

**Y**OUR last letter, and one from my sister† arrived at the same time, but how to break the melancholy contents to my mother, alas! I knew not. Emma's unfeeling letter she shall never see. Doctor Peters assisted me in disclosing some parts of your's to my dear parent; she insisted on reading the whole, and I verily thought the perusal would have killed her.

“Proud, inconsiderate girl! (she exclaimed) how have I deserved such usage?—and how severe will be your punishment?—Cruel Emma!—but in this world only may you suffer retribution, and Heaven grant you time to repent and amend!”

My poor mother grew faint—she was unable to shed a tear:—we conveyed her to bed—she had a dreadful night, and the next morning was extremely ill.

I thank God she is now rather better. To-day she thus addressed Mrs. Arnold:—“I am resigned,

† This letter does not appear.

and



and with submission kiss the rod of affliction ; -yet pangs inflicted by a darling child, are doubly agonizing !—but of that once-beloved girl I will think no more. If you ever see her, assure her that she has my forgiveness ; and daily shall I pray our Heavenly Father to forgive her also.—Now, my dear Mrs. Arnold, never again mention Emma to me.”

My mother has ordered her attorney to attend her this evening, accompanied by Dr. Peters. I hope she will make some little provision for poor Mrs. Arnold, to whose kindness I am much indebted ; in a few days you shall be better acquainted with this amiable woman ; of her dear child's recovery the doctor begins to entertain sanguine hopes.

Words are not sufficient to convey the sentiments of my heart when I wish to express how much I think myself obliged by all your friendly attentions ; but believe me, my dear Lady Williams,

Your truly grateful and affectionate,

ISABELLA MONTAGUE.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.



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